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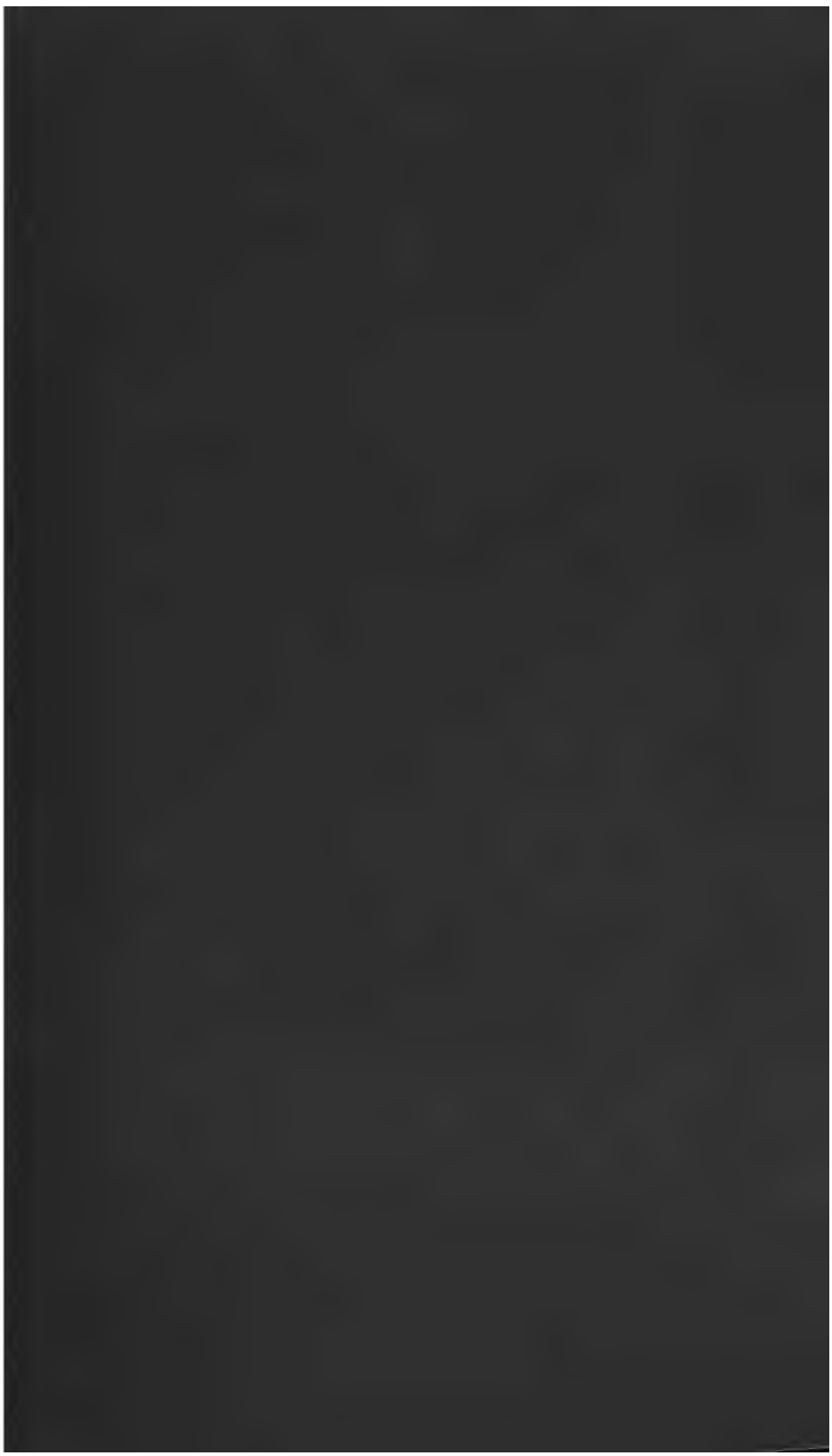

CHRISTIANITY AND COMMON SENSE.

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CHRISTIANITY AND COMMON SENSE.

By SIR WILLOUGHBY JONES, Bart., M.A.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

'Existimabam enim pro veritate non nisi veritate certandum, et quidem tali, quam ipse animo approbarem: frustra enim daturum me operam, ut persuaderem aliis quæ non ante mihi persuasissem.'

GROTIUS *de Veritate &c.* lib. i. sec. 1.

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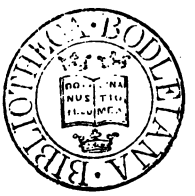
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PREFACE.

IN ordinary times, the writer of the following pages would not have presumed to lay before the public his thoughts and opinions upon religious subjects, however carefully formed and conscientiously worked out. He is well aware of the old adage that may be quoted against him, and that he cannot plead in extenuation any knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and but little of German theology. But he has a strong opinion that no man ever yet saved his soul by believing falsehoods, and he therefore feels that a simple statement of the grounds of his belief in the inspired Scriptures, and of the reasons of his dissent from the new school of theology, may be useful to some readers who, having neither the knowledge nor the time to test the assertions of these divines, yet *know* that, by God's grace, they have good grounds for refusing to assent to their conclusions. The simple alternative

that the poor, whose especial birthright is the Gospel, must for ever in future be excluded from an understanding of its meaning, and that they and all Christian men, up to the present time (including names like Barrow and Jeremy Taylor, representing intellects as vigorous and hearts as sound as any now existing) have lived, and thought, and written, and died in firm belief and dependence upon fables and falsehoods, is enough to make serious thinkers pause before they give in their adhesion to the new ideas. These reflections, and the fact that the desertion of certain of the commissioned officers to the enemy seems to impose new duties on the rank and file, must be his excuse for writing the present volume. He also ventures to repeat the hope that the broad views herein presented may not be without their value, not only to those who are unable, but also to that large portion of the Christian world who are unwilling, to embark in all the wearisome details of modern criticism. Conscience and reason alike tell them that they have a sure ground of faith in God's covenant and in God's revelation. They are therefore prepared to allow the two to stand or fall together.

They are quite aware that this may be, in the words of a well-known writer,* 'to bring the ark of God into the battle-field,' but they do not accept

* Colenso, Pentateuch. Preface, p. xxx.

the conclusion which he insinuates to be inevitable, that it must be taken and carried away into the temple of the Dagon of infidelity. Even if such were the result, they know it would be but temporary, and that the idol would soon fall prostrate before the ark of God; but they prefer to believe that God's blessing is with them in this matter, and that the walls of Jericho are a truer prognostic than the battle at Eben-ezer.

Be this as it may, the solution of the question whether God has in store for His Church a time of trial or a time of development and extended usefulness, must depend upon how far its individual members hold fast and cherish the treasure of knowledge and truth given them in the Bible. Hence the vital importance to the Church on earth, and to the soul of every Christian, of those questions raised by the new school of theology, whose leading dogma it is that every successive individual, in every successive generation, is to begin his religion *de novo*, and that if his life be spared for many years, and he succeed in mastering the Hebrew language, and seeing through the innumerable cloudy volumes of hazy German polemics, the Bunsens and Ewalds, corrected by the Kurtzes and Hengstenbergs, he may then begin to consider himself a Christian man. What is to become of the world at large under this theory it does not condescend to explain to us, but as no two of themselves agree in anything except

in pulling Scripture to pieces, the prospect is not encouraging.

There is some consolation, however, to be derived from the general reprobation that seems to have attended Mr. Matthew Arnold's theory, that while educated men must be sceptics, and ought to rejoice in that distinction, fables and falsehood are good enough for the swinish multitude. That Christianity is a sort of Eleusinian mystery is too palpably opposed to the whole current of Christian thought and Christian doctrine to be entertained even in these days, when men's minds appear to be wandering from true and simple and clear ideas into a waste of conjecture to a degree that does not 'alarm,' as Dr. Stanley imagines, but does grieve and distress logical and thoughtful minds. It seems, therefore, to be generally allowed that we must all sail in the same boat, and that what is a saving faith to a labouring man must also be a saving faith to the learned student. Where, then, is the difference between them, for a difference there certainly is in knowledge, and must therefore be in belief? We can plainly see that the philosopher must believe the axioms and postulates of religion which form the whole of the working man's faith, and he must also believe much more, because he must know much more;* and though his increased and

* How little we know except through the exercise of faith, how great is the share in all learning of every kind that apper-

varied reading may teach him much that he does not credit, much tinged with the vices inseparable from traditional and hearsay evidence; it must, on the other hand, by the light that it throws on the facts and doctrines of Scripture, enable him to possess a faith increased and developed in proportion to his more accurate knowledge of ancient languages, of experimental science, and of ascertained historical facts. Thus the difference may be compared with that which we find to exist between an elementary knowledge of exact science and all the other degrees of mathematical knowledge, until we arrive at the high attainments of an accomplished mathematician. The wrangler does not discredit the simple facts of elementary geometry or algebra, but, in addition to believing them, he sees the great purposes they serve in pure and applied science, in the truth sought out for itself, and in the truth followed up as the means whereby man can unravel the secrets of the universe. Such, and no other, ought to be the difference between the learned and unlearned Christian. This analogy—for it is a true analogy, and not an instance of that deceptive form of ornamental writing called an illustration—between God's truth in science and God's truth in revelation, might be carried out much

tains to belief, is considered at length at pp. 204, 205, *infra*. Faith, in this sense, is here said to be proportionate to knowledge.

farther, and the mathematician will not need to be reminded that, early in his course of study, he meets with insoluble difficulties (imaginary and impossible quantities he designates them), quantities the *origin* of which no reading or thought can explain, but of which the *necessary existence* and the varied application becomes evident to his mind exactly in the proportion that he masters the details and takes in the broad views of scientific truth. If, when he first met with these difficulties, he declined, in the pride of a half-informed intellect and a scanty knowledge, to bow before them, and insisted upon all truth being intelligible to himself, we can see that he might have become a distinguished member of that phalanx who have spent, and possibly are spending, their lives in attempting to square the circle, but that a mathematician he never would have been. So in theology; those who will not bow before that form of truth that God has not been pleased to make intelligible to our finite intellects, or that form of truth that He has been pleased only partially to reveal as a trial to our faith, may be eminent neo-logians, but will never arrive at true belief.

As this term, 'neo-logian,' will frequently occur in the following pages, it may be well to define its meaning. It is intended to refer to the supporters of those 'new ideas' as to the facts, inspiration, and doctrines of Scripture which have for some

years been advocated by a school of writers in Germany of which Baron Bunsen was an eminent member, and which have of late been brought prominently before the British public by the seven authors of 'Essays and Reviews.' Certain writers will be mentioned as belonging to this school, and where individual cases are alluded to, quotations from their books will be made in justification of the author's remarks. In all other cases, when the term is used it must be understood that the school is alluded to *generally*, and that the remarks do not refer to individuals who may hold its peculiar views only partially or in a greater or less degree.

There is an old Scripture saying that our sin is sure to find us out, and this truth is as applicable to idolatry as to any other sin. We are sometimes apt to confuse idolatry and image-worship, the sin against the first with the sin against the second commandment, and to fancy that because in the more advanced and intellectual state of society men have outgrown in a great degree the temptation to the second sin, they are therefore secure against falling into the first. Far from it; at no time was the idolatry of the intellect and reason of man more rife. When, after having for many years secretly worshipped our own reason under the delusion that we were worshipping the God of our fathers, the God of the Bible, our sin begins to find us out, it does so by requiring at our hands the costly sacrifice

of that Bible which in former years formed the strong foundation of our faith. Thus it comes to pass that when, with a great sound of wind-instruments, we set up the invisible and impalpable image of our own individual reason 'in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon,' it is no mean sacrifice that will satisfy this tyrannous and insatiable idol. At first he will take from us a portion of our belief, here a little and there a little, and as years go on we find that he requires more and more, and the condition of his existence as *ultimate arbiter of our faith* compels the sacrifice. At last nothing less than revelation itself will satisfy our relentless master, the whole Bible is cast upon the altar, and we fall back upon some faint outline of Christianity, of which every thought and word is, in truth, derived from the Bible, but which we fondly imagine that by means of some spiritual intuition we have discovered for ourselves.

We are not however justified in inferring that, because reason may not be the idol, it must therefore be the victim, — that we are bound to put superstition on the vacant throne, and offer up reason upon the altar. No sacrifice of the sort is required at our hands; and, in fact, the one idolatry is as bad as the other. For what is superstition but a synonyme for unbelief? What does it mean, except that we are afraid to look into God's dealings because we do not truly believe in His attributes;

that we conceive the meridian splendour of that Word which is light itself, to shrink before the three little taper flames that we bring with us, human knowledge, human intellect, and human reason? No; Reason has her proper place; and if she is not to be worshipped, on the other hand she is not to be sacrificed. It is true wisdom, the wisdom of Proverbs and Psalms, the wisdom so much eulogised in the Bible, that hits upon this happy mean. In the uneducated it may be defined as simple faith in simple truths. In the educated it is knowledge and discretion combined, or rather perhaps we should say, knowledge tempered by discretion. If we fearlessly pursue truth of every kind, but do so in firm belief in the Word of God and under an ever-present consciousness of His infinite power to will and to do as seemeth Him good, we shall not go far wrong. To read in this spirit will require from us a little humility, a little abnegation of intellectual pride, but it will not require us to grovel in the mire of an abject unreasoning superstition.

We may sum up the question by placing before ourselves three alternatives:—

Christianity with a true Bible,
Christianity with a false Bible,
or Christianity with no Bible at all.

The first of these alternatives is the Christianity of the Protestant, Roman, and Eastern Churches,

from the first germs of the faith to the present time.

The third is, *in fact*,* the Deism of Voltaire, the Positivism of Comte and his disciples, Bible abstract truths without Bible positive belief. It is the real logical conclusion of much that is now written on the neological side of the question.

The second considers itself a *via media*, and is the religion of many Germans and of a few Englishmen.

The sound and satisfactory grounds that we possess for adopting the first of these three alternatives, in contradistinction to the second or third, will form the subject of the present volume.

In conclusion, the author would call attention to the passage from Grotius which he has chosen for his motto. He would remind those who are ministers in the Church, whose duty it is to teach, that nothing in the world is so easy as to make men doubt, nothing so difficult as to make them believe. The former is an inglorious victory, the latter the triumph of the apostle and martyr. Those who spurn the easily won crown of the sceptic he would remind, that the key to open men's hearts is faith in the speaker; he would repeat the words of the old Dutch philosopher, 'that all their labour of preaching and teaching will be in vain, if

* See *infra*, p. 31.

they try to persuade others to credit that of the truth of which they are not firmly convinced themselves.'

CRANMER HALL :
February 7, 1863.

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LIMITS OF RELIGIOUS ENQUIRY.

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IN all the various intellectual pursuits of life—in languages, in chemistry, mathematics, philosophy —it is the fate of the unlearned to bow to the decision of those who have made these several branches of science or knowledge the subject of their special study. We all know and feel that we cannot become chemists, mathematicians, or philosophers, by intuition, or without a long previous course of study: we therefore accept at once the instruction of the learned; and it is to the books written by them that we revert when we wish to study such subjects for ourselves. This subjection of the unlearned to the learned seems so simple and so clear,

that we might at first sight be tempted to extend it to every branch, without exception, of human knowledge, and to every matter, without exception, of human thought. In fact, however, two exceptions to the rule exist. The first is the knowledge of right and wrong—a knowledge implanted in the heart of every man by the Divine gift of conscience, developed indeed by the study of the revealed word of God, and strengthened by implicit obedience to its mandates. The second exception includes those matters of thought, and objects of speculation, in which the infinite or the supernatural are involved: these being, by their very nature, unattainable by the intellect of man, are equally out of the reach of the learned and of the unlearned.

It will be worth while to pause for a moment, and consider how much harm has been done in former times by the learned and unlearned equally ignoring these two simple facts. The well-known, perhaps we should rather say notorious, school of Casuists arose from the attempt of a body of able men to instruct the world at large in the principles of right and wrong. They brought to their work intellects above average, and considerable erudition; they laid down axioms apparently simple, and, if not right, at all events innocuous; they worked out their conclusions with unanswerable logic; and when they had done all, they arrived at results that made them the laughingstock of the world.*

* Pascal, Provinciales, Letters 8, 9, and 14.

They proved, to their own satisfaction, that fraud, adultery, and murder might not be wrong; and it hardly needed the caustic and merciless pen of Pascal to consign them to that depth of human reprobation from which they have never emerged. Great harm had, however, been done: men had been taught to dally with their consciences, to seek from their fellow-men for arguments with which to refute the voice of the Spirit of God speaking to their souls; the very feeling of humility which might seem to impel them to seek advice was warped into evil, for the inexorable monitor within could not fail to tell them that the advice they sought was an excuse for sin. To the Jesuit body, from whom this stream of pollution flowed, the evil was still greater; their *intellectual* study of Conscience had brought them to the point at which they were unable to distinguish right from wrong; a moral blindness had fallen upon them; and, even at this day, much of the infidelity and atheism that afflicts the Continent of Europe is due to the revulsion of the conscience of man against the wickedness and falsehood of Jesuit teaching. Such having been the effects of an attempt to search intellectually into that which can only be spiritually discerned, hardly less injurious have been the effects of the attempts that have been frequently made by the learned to unravel and explain those circumstances in Scripture which claim to be miraculous and supernatural. It has pleased God to leave to every man the power of his own freewill to believe or disbelieve the

Holy Scriptures; and those writers who at once deny both the inspiration of the holy volume, and also the truth of the miracles it records, are undoubtedly exercising a right that belongs to them. When Hume propounded his sophism, that human testimony could not prove a miracle, because it was more likely that any number of men should be mistaken, or should state an untruth, than that a miracle should happen; when he relied upon human experience as disproving miracles, he carried his principles to their logical conclusion, and gave up the Bible and Christianity together. With this class of writers we have no concern—we leave them to go their way, and we go ours; but there is another class with whom, unfortunately, we have much to do—a class of writers who, while acknowledging the Christian religion to be true, endeavour to explain, as physical or natural phenomena, or else as errors or exaggerations, those miracles upon which that religion is mainly based, and which were its proofs and sanction to those from whom we have received it. The writings of Strauss are perhaps the best known and fairest specimens of this school; and, recently, Bishop Colenso has excited much scandal, and caused much sorrow to Christian men, by enrolling himself among them. The former of these writers endeavours to level the superstructure, the latter to undermine the foundations, of our faith. Strauss finds the Gospel biographies of our Saviour so replete in every page with the supernatural, that he is driven to pronounce the whole narrative a

myth, in order to escape the alternative of believing the miracles it involves. Colenso, on the other hand, with a want of logical acumen surprising in a sound mathematician, insists upon the fallacy that miracles admit of a greater and a less; and because he feels that he might possibly have fed and policed five thousand Israelites through the wilderness, he cannot allow it to be within the power of the Almighty to have done the same for a million and a half. With his better and fuller knowledge, he puts, as an unanswerable arithmetical problem, the question propounded by the disciple, in ignorance and unbelief, 'What are they among so many?'

This difficulty, so often buried and so often resuscitated, will never cease to importune mankind; and ten years hence, when the Bishop of Natal's book is forgotten, it will doubtless reappear in some other form. That the finite cannot measure the infinite, that great and small, past and present, are only incidents of our finite state, and cannot possibly adhere to the Most High; that, to put the case mathematically, all functions of infinity are, in fact, equal, and that this equality of the infinite is universally true, true of creative and administrative power as well as of space and figures, is an idea far too humiliating to the conceit and self-sufficiency of man ever to be universally accepted. Hence the class of books, and they are many in number, of which Strauss's 'Life of Jesus' and Colenso's 'Pentateuch' have been cited as specimens—books that have exercised the same sort of pernicious

influence on faith, that Jesuit casuistry has on morals.

To revert, then, to the point from which we digressed, we find that the province of a theologian as an instructor is bounded, that questions of right and wrong are left to be solved by the conscience of the simplest and humblest Christian, and that the miracles of revelation are, in fact, an appeal to faith and not to reason. Apart from these limits, the theologian has his own sphere of labour for himself, and of instruction for others; he compares the several books of Scripture, he works out their full and hidden meaning, he examines the text, he enquires into and masters the languages and dialects in which they were written, he dives into contemporaneous history, he searches the annals of the Church, and for these and many other matters it is to the books of the learned that we must go if we wish for instruction, and if we desire to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in us.

It is not to be supposed that the above limitations to theological enquiry, though clear and simple in themselves, will be universally accepted. The great number of books that have been written in contravention to them, and to which allusion has been made, is in itself a proof, and the strongest possible proof, that they are not obeyed, or their authority admitted, by the writers thereof. The first limitation will be decried as tending to put a stop to all moral treatises; the second as tending to degrade and dethrone human reason.

To this it may be answered, that moral treatises are in themselves good and useful, but only in so far as they chime in and accord with the consciences of the readers;* the margin is great of good and holy moral advice, acceptable to the consciences of all mankind; and the books that reiterate and impress such advice and such moral truths do not in any way come within our limitation. They only touch upon one half of the subject-matter. They enforce good, and by so doing tend to put back into the right course the wandering and erring minds of men; but when they move out of their sphere, and endeavour to strike the balance between good and evil, they are sure to drift into such enquiries as the when and the where man may do evil that good may come; they trespass on forbidden ground, and assuming to solve those questions, the settlement of which God has reserved to himself through the medium of every man's conscience, they show how weak, grovelling, and worthless is the intellect of man in the presence of the Spirit of God.

With respect to the second objection, it will be well to define our limitation a little more carefully and accurately. We bow to human reason, because we are aware that it is only through it that we know ourselves, the universe about us, or that we are brought in contact, through revelation, with the universe that is to be. We acknowledge that by

* Even the inspired Apostle appeals to this tribunal:—'By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God' (2 Cor. iv. 2).

human reason the claims of Christianity to our belief must be investigated; that as it is only through reason that we can read or understand the Scriptures, so it is by reason that they must be searched out and analysed; but we do not acknowledge that it follows that reason will be able to take in and understand every part of the sacred volume. There is much in the physical world that reason cannot master or apprehend, and there is much also in the spiritual world. Of these exceptional circumstances, miracles claim to be a portion. The miracle itself is in its very nature above our cognisance, but not so all its attendant circumstances; when, where, and how it was wrought, the effect it produced, all these are legitimate subjects of enquiry; and half the subtle and wearisome discussions on miracles would have been avoided had writers always been careful to discriminate between the miracle and its attendant circumstances. We shall hereafter have to go rather more at length into this matter when considering the modern criticism of the supernatural, whether in word or deed, prophecy or miracle; but at present we will merely answer to the charge of dethroning and degrading human reason: that we do not say that the light that is in us is darkness,* but we do say that its rays cannot illuminate what they cannot reach.

In the following pages an endeavour will be made to show that on broad and simple grounds

* Mansel, Bampton Lectures, p. 198.

Christianity has a full, ample, and complete claim upon our belief; that the Bible, the Divine record and revelation, stands or falls with Christianity; that if accepted as a Divine book, the Bible cannot and must not be freely handled and dealt with as any other book; that such treatment involves the idea that the Bible is to be looked at from a heathen, instead of from a Christian point of view, and we know that if it be a pillar of fire to the faithful, it is a cloud and darkness to the unbeliever.* We will, then, take a short view of modern Bible criticism, and we shall find it to involve what the holy volume has led us to expect would be the characteristic of the latter days,—Christianity and secular knowledge spreading everywhere, but faith everywhere assailed.

To this line of argument it may be objected that the writer is not impartial, that he starts with an avowed intention to believe the Scriptures, and that for a time, and while he is writing on such subjects, he ought to put himself in the position of an impartial judge. To this the writer would answer, 'Far be it from me; to me it belongs to endeavour to understand and, may be, explain the Holy Scriptures, not to judge them;' and he would for a moment suggest to those who, for a time,

* Exod. xiv. 20. The only revelation of God at this time was Personal; the only revelation at the present time is by His written Word. The terms used in the text are therefore a sound and true analogy, not a metaphor or simile. For revelation, see note, p. 11.

would try to soar in the empyrean, and bring the book of God to the bar of human reason, to reflect whether, when the interval of high exalted unbelief is over, and they would fain return to their former humble faith, they can feel quite sure that it will please God to allow them to do so.

The argument, then, will proceed as sketched out, in the humble hope that it may convince some readers that the books which are now making many a believer's heart sink within him are not really so formidable as they suppose; that they are simply old errors and objections revived, and that they need not fear for their own and their fathers' faith. They will find that there is but one real ground of difference between the sceptical writers of the present and the last century; the want of faith remains the same, the learning and knowledge have increased.

CHAPTER I.

THE ALTERNATIVE.

Christianity, or no Revelation at all — The latter Alternative considered — Excesses of apostatised France no Argument — Probable Condition of the Nations without a Revelation — Condition of Man without a Revelation — Difference from Present State not one of Degree.

IT is impossible for the Christian reader or writer to impress himself too often or too deeply with the simple and inevitable alternative, that one of the following three suppositions *must* be true — either, firstly, the Creator of the Universe has left the world without any revelation * of His existence or His

* *Revelation* is something revealed, made open; it is therefore distinct from *manifestation*. There has been, at all times, a twofold manifestation of God, in the universe, and in the soul of man; but revelation to the *world at large* there was not until after the advent of Christ. Hence it is an error of language to term the individual sense of divinity, with which the Deistic and Pantheistic schools of theology are satisfied, a revelation. It is a manifestation, but it cannot be correctly termed a revelation. A revelation must claim openly, in the face of the world, to *reveal* the Person and Will of God. The manifestation to the soul of man ceases to be in this world at the death of each individual. It is stronger or weaker, may

will; or, secondly, some one of the heathen religions is such revelation; or, thirdly, Christianity is true. There is no possible escape from one of these three alternatives. The second is so shocking, so degrading to God and man, that we will not entertain it here; we will not consider the religion of Confucius, the worship of Buddha or Vishnu, or the Fetish superstition of the savage, as even putting in a claim to be a revelation of the Most High Creator of the Universe. The question, therefore, resolves itself into the following alternative: either the world is lying in utter and complete darkness, without any revelation of God whatever, or Christianity is true. Whenever we are disposed to trifle with our faith, whenever the perusal of some bitter sophistry makes us lay down the Holy Book with a perplexed and irreverent feeling, it will be well for us to repeat to ourselves this alternative:—Either I am drifting on this boundless ocean without compass or chart, going I know not whence or whither, or else Christianity is true, and this Holy Book that I am asked to despise is at once my compass and my chart; it shows me the rocks and shallows of the passage through this life, and points to a safe haven of rest in the life to come. We will proceed to consider the first of these two propositions—the world without any revelation whatever.

The proposition here laid down can itself be

be developed or crushed; while the written revelation remains fixed and unalterable, the teacher of successive generations of men. Hence the alternative in the text is strictly true.

considered under a twofold aspect. First, what might we expect in such a case to be the social condition of the world, the state of civilisation and happiness of the several nations of which it is composed, its domestic economy, the extent of its knowledge, the nature of its laws and polity; and, secondly, what might we look for as the normal mental state of the individual man.

In such an investigation as this, it is not unusual, especially in speeches and discourses, to point to the atrocities committed in France during the period of the reign of terror and of the worship of the goddess of Reason, as instancing what we might expect from a godless civilisation. If quoted with reference to an apostatised world, the precedent is sound, and, if the circumstances were to recur (which God forbid!), would probably prove to be exact. Not so, however, if quoted with reference to a world that had never known a revelation. Were all the human race to discredit the Bible and repudiate Christianity, the book would still be a great fact, that would have shaped and modified, and would continue to shape and modify, all the laws, the customs, the literature, and the thoughts of civilised man. We do not believe the plays of Shakspere, but our disbelief does not annihilate the book or destroy its power. Hence, while the excesses of the French revolutionists after they had repudiated Christianity, may be considered as the acts of men half demented with fury, but with sufficient method in their madness to show that they were sinning

against light and knowledge, they afford no clue to our present enquiry,—What would (in all probability) have been the state of the world without a revelation?

That feature of Christianity to which allusion has just been made—the overwhelming and overpowering force by which it has moulded and almost re-created the human race in all countries to which it has extended, whether in its purest form, as an enlightened Bible Christianity, or in its more corrupted form, as the same doctrine overlaid with much human invention, or, finally, in its debased form, as the doctrine laid hold of by a false prophet and by him commingled with evil and falsehood—precludes us from finding in the civilised world, or even in the countries subject to Mahometanism, any analogy to the state of the world into which we are enquiring. Experience, however, shows us that it is only the most brutalised savage, such as the Australian negro, the Andaman islander, and some few other debased types, that is content to exist without any ostensible revelation; all other nations put forth some religion or other, which they claim to be a revelation of God. Unless, therefore, we are disposed to consider that mankind would have gone back from Greek and Roman civilisation into utter barbarism (and such an opinion may be fairly held, and, looking at the cataclysm of the break-up of the Roman Empire, is in itself far from improbable), we must allow that the better class of heathen nations of the present day—such as India and China—

afford a means of gauging the degree of civilisation and prosperity to which the world would have arrived had a revelation been withheld. We will not say that such nations constitute a sample or model, but we are justified in saying that they afford a fair type, inasmuch as they consist of large divisions of the human family obeying pseudo-revelations that they have invented for themselves; and we are bound to remember that as there has hitherto been no instance of any heathen nation inventing for itself a simple, intelligible, philosophical form of belief, so we are debarred by analogy from concluding that such an event would have happened in Europe. Supposing letters to have revived, no doubt certain master-minds, pure and upright, would have developed their inward teachings of God, and probably have adopted the high moral standard of Platonic philosophy; but could the millions, the workers, the mass, have done this,—men who believe the outlines of a creed with a simple and earnest faith that the learned man may envy, but who require the doctrines to be few and plain that they may believe? No; to such, forming the great bulk of humanity, something more definite than an esoteric deism is necessary; and we can safely and truly assert that, without a Divine revelation, all mankind would have been divided into different forms of idolatrous worship. Odin and Thor, Jupiter and Pallas, having the prestige of venerable antiquity, are quite as likely to have been dominant in Europe at the present time as any new divinity.

No one religion would have contained in itself that power of truth that would have enabled it, like Aaron's rod, to swallow up the other forms of belief; and the best we can hope is, that being mutually tolerant they might have respected each other, and that, in the cycle of events, that state of things might have recurred so well defined in Gibbon's well-known formula, when the people believed all religions to be equally true, the philosopher believed them to be equally false, and the magistrate to be equally useful.

Upon our supposition that no *true* religion existed, the best thing that could have happened to the European family would have been to have believed in no religion at all; to have arrived at the general scepticism of which we now see an example in China; and it only requires us to impress this fact on our minds, to enable us, to a certain extent, to appreciate the advance made by mankind under the guidance of the Christian dispensation. It is unnecessary to pursue this enquiry further, to develope point by point the superiority of the position at which Christian nations have arrived over that occupied by any, even the most enlightened, heathenism; but the rise and fall of ancient civilisations, the manner in which they rose, culminated, and disappeared, compared with the steady, constant, upward march of the human race since the Christian dispensation, is alone enough to teach us the sufferings and vicissitudes that the world would have gone

through, had it pleased God to withhold, even for two thousand years longer, the full revelation of Himself through His Son.

Is it consistent with the order, the κόσμος, the symmetry of all we contemplate around us in the physical world, where we see each creature fulfilling his part, each planet moving in its course, that such should have been the ultimate destiny of the human race? Our intellects recoil from such a conclusion; and our conviction that a revelation of God to man is essential to the harmony of creation will be further strengthened, when we consider, secondly, its effect upon the mind and the character of the individual man.

If we survey the scheme of creation, one salient fact will strike us, and that is, that every creature—from the diatomic frustule, or the aphis on the rose, to the whale of the ocean, or the elephant of the forest—is in a state of absolute contentment; it is placed in a position in which all its wants are satisfied; in one word, it is made to consume the food on which it lives, and to occupy the place it inhabits; every organ, every sense, is, even to our limited apprehensions, clearly suited to the element, be it earth, air, or water, in which it disports itself. In man alone, were he left without any revelation, this law of nature would seem to fail. He only of created beings has the knowledge of his own existence—'I think, therefore I am'—and a sure instinct tells him that that identity cannot be annihilated or even modified by any change that may take place

in his physical existence. He feels that identity to be absolute, and as he would not the less continue to be himself were limb after limb taken from him, he knows that he lives and exists independently of this body and of this world. Hence he has a desire, an irresistible craving, to know what will become of himself after the change of death has passed over him. He sees that change to be inevitable, and from the earliest period he has allowed his mind to speculate on what will be hereafter. Such speculations and hopes or fears are too universal not to take their place as part of the same phenomena with the instinct that guides the ox to feed on the grass, or the fish to swim in the water. The human soul cannot exist in the tranquil medium of the beasts that perish. It would, therefore, be an anomaly without example in creation were such a want to be left unsatisfied, and were man alone of existing beings to be placed in a position unfitted to gratify all his wants, and to fully develope his moral and intellectual being. This is really so; for if we have no revelation, the whole human race, without exception, is feeding on the intellectual garbage of falsehood. Since the creation of the world, under the form of different religions, men have believed in different supernatural beings and in different phases of the future state; and if Christianity be not true, every individual man, from creation to the present time, has believed in, hoped in, and lived in dependence upon a falsehood. But the human soul is no more fitted to dwell in a medium of lies than

a horse is to fly in the air, or a fish to walk on the land. We feel this, we know it, our conscience tells us that it is so. Can it, then, be the fact that, while every other creature is placed in its proper medium, man has been placed on earth in order that he may believe a lie? It is as necessary that man should believe something as that he should breathe air. Everywhere, and at all times, man *has believed* something; and as we cannot allow that man, unaided, could arrive at Divine truth, every man, if there be no revelation, has at all times believed and acted upon a lie. This consideration almost involves a *reductio ad absurdum*. The fact that revelation should be partial, and a portion of the human race in darkness, is a *difficulty* that will be considered hereafter; but that there should be no truth, that there never should have been any truth, really amounts to an *impossibility*. And it will be well for us further to reflect, that, if Christianity be true, it never can be said that *at any one time* all humanity believed a lie, for in the Sacred Volume it plainly appears that from the creation of man God has never been without a witness. The proportion of true to false believers has greatly varied at different epochs of the world's history, but *some* there have always been; and it is worth noticing that under *no other possible* circumstances can this be the case, as not any other dispensation (the Deism and Pantheism of the present day included) comes to us by successive steps *traceable* from primordial time. On the one supposition, at no period

since the creation of the world has all mankind been in darkness; on the other, there never has been, and is not now, a single human being *certainly* possessing the Divine light!

The difference, then, in the mind and character of the individual man in the cases we are considering can hardly be termed one of degree. The true believer lives in an atmosphere of truth; the believer in false gods and false theologies in an atmosphere of falsehood: the one has a sure knowledge, from revelation, of the state beyond the grave; the other rushes into every sort of fond speculation, from Charon's boat to the Nirvana of Buddhism, or the annihilation of the Sadducee: the one knows this world to be a state of trial and probation; the other accepts as the *non plus ultra* of human wisdom the saying, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,' or else strives by a life of self-imposed suffering to ward off that wrath of God against sin of which his conscience (the law alike to Christian and Pagan) is for ever warning him. Is it this sure knowledge, this atmosphere of truth and certainty, that, from the analogy of nature, forms the medium for human spiritual life; or, on the other hand, does uncertainty, varying opinions, groping in the dark, idolatry, no knowledge of anything definite here or hereafter, form a better, more appropriate, and more natural moral atmosphere for such spiritual existence?

We should, *primâ facie*, expect to find a human being nurtured in the first of these conditions

totally different, mentally and spiritually, from one nurtured under the second; and such we find to be the case if we contemplate the true Christian as compared with the heathen, or, on a larger scale, if we compare Christian and heathen communities. Such thoughts, while they show us what the world would have been without a revelation, must also satisfy us that such a destiny could not have been the destiny reserved for man by the Allwise Creator of the universe.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANALOGY.

A Revelation probable — Analogy of Revealed and Natural Religion — Argument from Analogy explained — Its Force — Esoteric Deism defined and examined — Its Claims to be a Revelation — to be a definite Creed — Deism a Negation merely — The Analogy of Revealed and Natural Religion shown in the Personality of God — in His Attributes — in His Supremacy over Sin, Sorrow, Pain, and Death — in the revealed Fact that Pain and Death result from Sin — in the future State of Rewards and Punishments — The Doctrine of Rewards and Punishments considered — The Analogy in Redemption — in Scripture Difficulties, e. g. in the partial Dissemination of Christianity — in Special Providence — in Miracles — Analogy a pioneer Argument.

WE have in the preceding chapter considered the *primâ facie* probability of God giving to man a revelation of His Person and of His Will from a Christian point of view. Had we adopted the hypothesis that Christianity is merely developed heathenism, then the argument would have been totally different: in that case we should have been reasoning about a state of things of which we have no experience whatever; for the world, under such a supposition, being at the present time without any revelation, and Christianity being one of those

humanly-invented religions of which so many have risen and disappeared, leaving little else than their traces in stone or brass, we should have no data from which to reason as to what a revelation might be, or how it would affect mankind. The argument itself is one that could never have been attempted by a Greek or Egyptian philosopher, except upon the tacit assumption that the religion of Olympus or the worship of Isis, as the case might be, was a true revelation of Divinity; for if they doubted or disbelieved the light they imagined that they possessed, and had no other definite revelation to put in its place, they would clearly have been arguing from nothing about nothing. The argument would have assumed this form: Is it probable that an event will happen (i.e., God give to man a revelation of His Person and His Will) which never has happened as yet, of which we have no experience, and the nature of which we cannot picture to ourselves? The futility of such an enquiry is self-evident; we therefore had a right to argue, it being within our experience that God has given a definite revelation of His Person and His Will to man, how far is there a *primâ facie* probability, from the analogy of nature and the experience of history, that He would have so revealed Himself?

A revelation of God to man being, then, shown to be probable, we will next consider what sort of revelation He has bestowed upon us; and the first form our enquiry will take will be, Does what we see in nature accord with what we find in the

Bible? How far is there *analogy* between natural and revealed religion?

In an enquiry such as that in which we are about to be engaged, we do well to commence by repeating the saying of Bacon, 'that it were better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him; for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely.' This reflection should be in the mind of everyone who writes or speaks on the evidences or analogy of revealed religion; for while it makes us look to all we write and say with wholesome reverence and awe, that we may not offend, it will also prevent our treating God as if He were man — as if His thoughts were our thoughts, and His ways our ways; for such is clearly an *unworthy* opinion to entertain of Him who formed us, body, soul, and spirit — of whose laws we know scarcely anything, and even whose material universe is altogether beyond our mental or corporeal apprehension.

The argument from analogy, however, when reverently treated, is not amenable to any such charge. It is not based upon the supposition that human reason would enable man to invent or find out the sort of revelation that God would give, or that man has a right to form any expectation or anticipation on such a subject; but the main ground and gist of the argument is as follows:

The world at large, and each individual man, is at the present moment, and always has been, under the direct and immediate government and control

of Almighty God. It follows that the impress and seal of His moral laws must be patent and visible in society, and must be stamped on the soul of man, just as His physical laws are visible in the universe. If the world was governed by fate or chance, there would be an end of the argument by analogy. As it is, the investigation of our own conscience and intellect reveals to us certain moral facts: when we look into society at large, we see the same facts universally developed, showing that they are common to all men, and pervade all society, just as they do each individual of which such society is composed. Without, then, pretending or presuming to judge the word of God, we are at liberty to compare the facts and laws we find therein with those moral facts to which we have just alluded as common to mankind; and if we find a clear and complete analogy between them, it will be a strong argument that the Author of the Book is the Ruler of the universe.

The argument from analogy does not pretend or assume to be absolute or perfect, because a revelation of God *might* be anything that He pleased; but within this limit it is a sound and good argument; and if it can be shown that the facts and precepts in the Bible are strictly analogous to what are called the great moral laws of nature, it will be a strong proof that the Bible is true. No attempt will be made in the following pages to enter into any of those details worked out by Bishop Butler in his elaborate treatise; but the

broad features of the argument by analogy will be sketched under five or six simple heads.

Before, however, we enter upon the argument, it will be right to give precedence to those thinkers who assert that there is no such analogy, properly so called, but that the book of nature is God's revelation of Himself to man; that there exists no other revelation; and that it is only by the study of God's laws and God's works, and by a close examination of our own spiritual being, that we can arrive at a knowledge of the Creator of the universe.

These views, to which allusion has before incidentally been made, constitute the esoteric Deism of the philosopher, and the infidelity of the ordinary unbeliever. The latter, being simply the negative of all we believe, salved over by some empty talk about laws not understood, will not call for notice here; but the former is a widely-spread form of error, and one which, by its vagueness, and by its deference to the intellectual pride of man, commends itself especially to the young and enthusiastic, to the unripe scholar, to the crude thinker, to the intellectually proud, at all periods and in all positions of life, and is the fancied haven of refuge of those who, reading the Bible in a critical, discontented, and unbelieving spirit, fail to find therein the water of life.

The term esoteric has been applied more than once in the previous pages to the tenets of Deism, and it has been so to distinguish between the higher

class of Deism that exists in civilised intellectual communities, and the coarser forms of quasi-Atheism, whose god is a sort of 'lubber-fiend,' doing hard work under the iron rule of an inexorable ἀνάγκη * called 'the laws of nature;' to distinguish between the impersonal creation of the mind and conscience (in which the conscience bears much part) and the mere handicraftsman of the universe. Hence it has been called 'esoteric,' not in the sense of 'the more hidden and abstruse meaning of a doctrine,' but in the sense of a doctrine worked out by a more careful collation of the works of nature, and the laws of the universe, with the reason and conscience of man, —a religion, if I may call it so, developed *within* the mind of man, and hence properly esoteric.

Our first question in considering Deism, such as it has been described, will be: Is it a revelation at all? and has it any right to claim to be a revelation? The God whose existence it discloses to us, by gathering His attributes of power, universality, and love from nature, of truth and uprightness from conscience, of infinity from reason, is after all nothing but a collection of adjectives—there is no noun substantive in the matter; and who can say, if there were, whether it would be singular or plural, whether there be one God or many Gods? Certainly the human intellect would not make God both one and three, as revelation teaches us that He is. Can this be called a revelation which fails to answer the

* Fate, necessity.

simple elementary question, Is there one God, two Gods, or many Gods? It may be said, Monotheism is an essential part of the deistic creed, and that this is an unfair question to put. Let it be so; but such an acknowledgement will only amount to this: that, for the first step in its creed, Deism has gone to the Bible; for, certainly, no sure or certain evidence of there being only one God is to be gathered from nature. On the contrary, when philosophy, unaided by revelation, has struck out a spiritual form of religion, it has always taken the form of Ormuzd and Ariman, of the spirit of good and the spirit of evil; and it is only from revelation that we know that the spirit of evil is not a god. This by way of protest against the assumption that philosophic or esoteric Deism is essentially monotheistic; but we will allow, for the simple reason that has been stated before, that in Christian countries it is so. Well, then, we have a simple and single Being, surrounded by attributes which we will allow to belong to God Most High. How far is the doctrine at this stage a revelation? To ascertain this, we must try another test. If it be a revelation, it must so far reveal God, that two men of ordinary intellects will think nearly alike about Him. Is this the case in a deism worked out in the mind of an individual, with no other guidance than what he sees around him in the world? Let us consider the philosopher's ideal. We will assume our philosophic friend to be a prosperous easy-going man, with plenty of literary leisure, sufficient means, and good

health; his ideal divinity would be elaborate, for he would have had abundant spare time to concoct him; we may be sure that he would, in most respects, reflect the mind that made him, and that the result would be, if not a very consistent or formidable deity, at all events an easy-going, good-natured, lovable sort of imaginary being. Possibly our friend would have gone to the pages of Plato for help in his arduous work; but one thing we may safely assert, that if he be an Englishman, Frenchman, German, or any civilised man of the present day, he will certainly have gone to the Bible; and many distorted passages, and isolated portions of Divine truth, will be here and there discernible in the motley garb of his spiritual image. We may, on the whole, infer that his mental creation would ultimately result in a being that might be liked, but could not be feared.

Let us now take the case of yon labouring man, with his life of toil and privation, or yon pauper, with his ragged famished wife and children; what sort of god will they make for themselves during their few moments of leisure? We may safely predict, as in the last case, that their mental creation will reflect the condition of their own minds. And what is that state? Why, it is the absorbing, overwhelming, overpowering, consciousness of one idea, and that idea the social inequalities of this life. To the *believing* beggar or pauper the greatest blessings are promised; but what can we say of the unbelieving beggar-deist's god? We will not endeavour to

depict him; but we may safely say, he would be an imagination more to be feared than loved.

Can that be termed a *revelation* that would leave two men to worship two such different ideals, simply because they happened to be placed in different positions and spheres of life, with different means of acquiring knowledge, different temptations, and different thoughts? No: such considerations as these must convince us that the laws of nature and the conscience of man are severally a *manifestation*; but that they are not, whether considered separately or in combination, a *revelation* of the Divine Being.

Having thus considered the claims of Deism to be in any strict or logical sense a *revelation* of God, there is another and different point of view under which we may look at the further question of the truth or falsehood of modern Deism, *as a doctrine*; and that is the argument from the analogy of nature. Worshipping is as natural to man as seeing, or hearing, or smelling. But all senses or instincts (and we may call the veneration felt for, and the worship paid to, a Superior being, an instinct, if it be nothing higher) have an objective. We see a tree, we hear a sound, we smell a flower, or we love a parent or child. Upon the suppositions of Deism, the objective and subjective in the single matter of religious belief become identical. By the analogy of nature they ought to be distinct. In Deism we imagine a god by the exercise of our intellects, and then we are to worship and love him. But is it not true that we only imagine that we worship

and love him; that we do not do so *really*? Can our worship be more real and definite than our god? and if we know the one only through our imagination, and not from any sure and certain knowledge, must not our worship be imaginary also? The vague and imaginary nature of our deity must pervade all our mental tribute, and it is because man must worship something, and Deism offers him nothing but a shadow, that we have no instance of a pure spiritual Deism influencing or holding large bodies of men, or even small numbers, for any lengthened period. As infidelity, as a negation of Christianity, it has always had, and always will have, a certain following; but as a definite creed and form of belief, it can hardly be said to exist. It is indeed a negation merely, and as such it ought to be treated.

As seen in Christian countries, the opinions we have just been considering are nothing, in fact, but a pale image or reflection of Christian truth seen through the medium of infidelity. Our Christianity is part of our spiritual nature, and we can no more put it off than we can change the colour of our skins. We can repudiate the Book that has fashioned all our laws and customs, that has given us our Sundays, whose commands, known to everyone, are lurking in every man's mind, whether he is obeying them or not; we can repudiate the Book if we will (God allows us freewill in this as in everything else), but we cannot, we are absolutely unable to shake off its influence, or divest ourselves of its teaching. All the good, the noble, the true thoughts

(and they are many) that we discover in the refined Deism of the present day, are but the images and reflections of the Deist's Christian childhood, Christian life, and Christian Bible.

Such, then, is Deism; and while we acknowledge the existence of germs of truth in its doctrines, and of worth and sincerity among its converts, we find that it possesses no claim to be a *revelation* of God, and that its doctrines offer no sure or certain *ground of faith*. We shall probably have to revert to it as the inevitable goal to which many modern Bible critics are drifting; but for the present we may bid adieu to its hollow and empty wordy phantasms.

In direct opposition and antithesis to the form of error we have been considering, we will take as the *first* point, in which the Bible follows the analogy of nature, the Personality of the Godhead. We had from analogy a right to expect that God would be revealed as a Personal God, and it is as a Personal God that we find Him set before us in the Bible. It will not be worth while to repeat in other words the argument against an impersonal God which we have just completed—an argument which goes to show that the mind of man has been so constituted by its Creator that it cannot conceive of Him, or picture Him, obey Him, or love Him, except as a Person. It might doubtless have pleased God to have created man with powers of perception and abstraction which we cannot imagine or describe, but as man at present exists he cannot love, worship, or obey an abstract idea, and hence

it has pleased God to reveal the mystery of His Being under a personal form.

That He has done so, that He is so revealed in the Bible, is from the analogy of nature a powerful argument in favour of the truth and authenticity of the Holy Book, and our consideration of this subject cannot better be summed up than in the words of Professor Mansel: 'Are we justified, even on philosophical grounds, in denying the Personality of God, or do we gain a higher or surer representation of Him by asserting with the ancient or modern Pantheist that God, as absolute and infinite, can have neither intelligence nor will? Far from it. We dishonour God far more by identifying Him with the feeble and negative impotence of thought which we are pleased to style the Infinite, than by remaining content within those limits which He, for His own good purposes, has imposed upon us; and confining ourselves to a manifestation, imperfect indeed and inadequate, and acknowledged to be so, but still the highest idea that we can form, the noblest tribute that we can offer. Personality, with all its limitations, though far from exhibiting the absolute nature of God as He is, is yet truer, grander, more elevating, more religious, than those barren, vague, meaningless abstractions in which men babble about nothing under the name of the Infinite. Personal, conscious existence, limited though it be, is yet the noblest of all existences of which man can dream; for it is that by which all existence is revealed to him: it is grander than the

grandest object that man can know; for it is that which knows, not that which is known. "Man," says Pascal, "is but a reed, the frailest in nature; but he is a reed that thinks. It needs not that the whole universe should arm itself to crush him,—a vapour, a drop of water, will suffice to destroy him. But should the universe crush him, man would yet be nobler than that which destroys him; for he knows that he dies; while of the advantage that the universe has over him the universe knows nothing."* It is by consciousness alone that we know that God exists, or that we are able to offer Him any service. It is only by conceiving Him as a Conscious Being that we can stand in any religious relation to Him at all; that we can form such a representation of Him as is demanded by our spiritual wants, insufficient though it be to satisfy our intellectual curiosity. It is from the intense consciousness of our own real existence as *Persons* that the conception of *reality* takes its rise in our minds; it is through that consciousness alone that we can raise ourselves to the faintest image of the *supreme reality of God.*'

Next to the revelation of the Person of the Almighty Creator which our limited intellectual capacity requires, which the analogy of nature suggests, and which we find furnished to us in a manner that the feeblest intellect can take in and

* Pascal, Pensées, P. I. art. 4, § 6; quoted in Mansel's Bampton Lectures, p. 86.

the strongest cannot overstep, in the Holy Scriptures; we should expect to find in a revelation an authorised publication of the moral government of God, and that such authorised publication would disclose a system of government analogous to, and explanatory of, what we see in the world around us. For we must always bear in mind that nothing happens by chance, that everything we see and apprehend is caused and carried out by the *direct immediate action* of supreme power. We have no right, therefore, to cast aside the present state of the world and the present condition of society as dross,—to say that it is unintelligible, full of contradictions, that the world of the future will be something far simpler and plainer (whispering, in fact, in our hearts that it will be more like what we should have ourselves devised), but, on the contrary, we ought to look at the world *as it is* in a humble enquiring spirit; we should then compare what we find written of God's moral government in the book of nature with what we find written in the Book of His revealed word: the comparison will show us that the God of the Bible is the God of Nature, the God who made us; that as there are difficulties in Nature, so there are difficulties in the Bible; and, lastly, that as we cannot raise our hand and grasp at Sirius, or turn the smallest planet from its course, so we find in Scripture mysteries that we cannot fathom, dispensations before which our minds fall prostrate, and confess their nothingness in sackcloth and ashes.

Having considered the first all-important question, that it has pleased God to reveal Himself as a Personal God, and having shown that man has been placed on earth with an intellect such that, to him, a command to be a command, and a precept to be a precept, must emanate from some Person, we next arrive at the question, What are the attributes of Himself that it has pleased God to reveal to us? and how far do they correspond with what from the analogy of nature we might expect? These attributes we find to be eternity,* infinity, omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, love, truth. These all are attributes which the conscience and intellect of man tell him must belong to the Supreme Being. And this is a sure proof that they do so belong; for these attributes constitute the initial instinctive knowledge of Himself implanted by the Creator in the mind of the creature from the moment of his first existence, and we may appeal to this consciousness with the same absolute certainty that we do to the unerring instincts of the lower order of animals.

That this is a *given* instinct, a sure and certain knowledge that cannot be mistaken, we gather from one very simple consideration. It is universal, and has always been entertained by the whole human race;† and yet the wisest and ablest men, the

* *Vide* Isaiah lvii. 15; Jer. xxiii. 24; Rev. xix. 6; Isaiah xlv. 21; Exod. xxxiv. 7; 1 John iv. 8.

† A savage prays to his idol. He believes him to hear him —omniscience; to be a living deity—eternity; to be able to answer his prayer—omnipotence; to be able to hear another

genius of Leibnitz and Pascal, the unwearied research of every great mathematician and sound thinker, have been unable to devise any explanation in words, any formula in symbols, or any diagram in lines, by which the *real and definite meaning* of the words 'eternal' and 'infinite' can be conveyed to the human mind.

To the plain, uninformed thinker, to the mass of mankind, these words are perfectly simple and clear; to the learned they are a puzzle; and yet learned and unlearned alike *know* that they are attributes of Godhead. The symbol under which the infinite presents itself to us in mathematics, a fraction, $\frac{1}{0}$, is of itself a lesson to man how unequal is his intellect to cope with the hidden things of God. There it is; what does it mean? Look at it, $\frac{1}{0}$, and remember that this is the simplest and truest expression* that the mind of man has yet devised to represent the infinite. A thought that cannot be expressed in words is no thought at all, says Sir William Hamilton, and man is compelled to confess that he cannot even conceive the infinite. Why is this? Because he is himself

savage praying at the same time a mile off—infinity; while wisdom, love, and truth are testified to by the universal conscience of man.

* If the reader will treat this symbol by the ordinary rules of vulgar fractions in arithmetic, he will observe, that multiplied by any number it is no greater, divided by any number it is no less; that any number added to it does not increase it, and any number subtracted from it does not diminish it; these are all attributes of the Infinite.

finite, and that there is that incompatibility between the finite and the infinite that the one cannot embrace, apprehend, or even in the least degree entertain the other.

The same reasoning applies to omnipotence and omniscience, when brought in contact with the existence of evil in the world, and freewill among its animated inmates. The difficulties are insuperable, but they are simply the contradictions caused by an absolute ignorance on our part of the real meaning of the words omnipotence and omniscience. Men may waste their lives upon such problems, they may go mad over them, but they will never succeed in mastering the smallest iota or fraction of the difficulty.

Is not that, then, a real instinct—a real manifestation of Himself to the soul of man—that has induced human beings, at all ages of the world's history, to defer these attributes to the Creator? Manifestly it is so. We might, therefore, expect to find them in the Bible, and there we do find them.

But it is not for nothing that God has so revealed Himself to man, both in the religion of nature and in revelation; though we cannot understand these attributes in themselves, we can understand their results, and, what is of more importance, and more to the purpose in a revelation *to man*, we can see how they affect ourselves. Because He is eternal, we know that our identical self must be *for ever* under His government; because He is infinite, we know that He pervades all space; because He is

omnipotent, we know that fate, chance, and necessity exist not. His omniscience tells us that we can hide nothing from Him; while His wisdom and love we see in creation and redemption, and His truth in the conscience of man.

It may be said that the universal acceptance of these facts prevents their presence in the Bible from being any argument in its favour. But we must recollect that, though shadowed out in false religions, these attributes have only been given to their false deities in partial measure. Power, indeed, and duration, have generally been bestowed, and even knowledge in a degree; but where has been the wisdom, love, and truth? where, even in the most spiritual false religions, that direct government of the world that excludes fate, chance, and necessity?

But, not to pursue this enquiry further, it must be allowed that the announcement in the Bible that such attributes belong to God is an argument in favour of the truth of the Holy Book; the greater or less weight to be attached to it is a point that every man must decide for himself. Had any one of these attributes been omitted from the Scriptures, its omission would, *pro tanto*, have constituted an argument against them; the presence, therefore, of all these attributes, and their being uniformly and consistently applied to the Divine Being, is undeniably an argument in their favour.

As an authorised publication of God's moral government, we should expect to find in revelation, thirdly, some notice of sin and death. Man, seeing

sin and sorrow, and pain and death, the two former the portion, in a greater or less degree, of all *human* beings, the two latter the portion, without exception, of every being that exists on earth, would look to revelation to see if it gave any account of these phenomena. He would find the fact of sin recognised, and the existence of evil spirits acknowledged; he would find, further, that sorrow, pain, and death resulted from sin, and, last of all, he would find that evil spirit, sin, sorrow, pain, and death, were all subordinate to, and overruled by, the all-powerful, all-wise, infinitely holy, and infinitely good God. Of the problem of the existence and origin of these five phenomena we have just spoken; it is, in its very nature, altogether above the cognisance of man, and therefore, as we might expect in a revelation made *for man*, it is not even alluded to.

That Scripture *has revealed to us nothing* of these great mysteries, unintelligible as they are to our finite intellects—problems not only absolutely but essentially insoluble by our understanding and our reason—is a point we should always bear in mind and remember. When the philosopher points to the testimony of the rocks, and shows us death the ultimate issue of life through countless ages; when the poet tells us of those

> Dragons of the prime,
> That tore each other in their slime;

they do not in any degree invalidate that is written, *that death resulted from sin.* We know that sin as

well as death existed before the creation of man, for when man walked in Eden the serpent was there. How, or where, or when they originated we *may* know hereafter, but we *cannot* know now; but who can contemplate in his mind's eye the word-picture quoted above from Tennyson, who can see two dogs fighting, or a cat torturing a mouse, without the instinctive feeling that Satan has an influence, a certain mysterious power, even over the brute creation—that to that cause the phenomenon of death *may* therefore in all cases be traced? Man, immortal in his soul, might have been, we are told, immortal in his body, had he kept himself pure from sin; made as he is in God's image, gifted as he is with reason and intellect, there is no *primâ facie* cause why, in a body exempt from the curse of sin, he should not have been an exception to the law of death.

What might have happened had man remained pure and sinless, how the precious blessings might have been extended to all created beings, is beside our present enquiry, which is to ascertain whether the revealed fact, that pain, sorrow, and death, result from sin, is or is not in analogy with what we see around us every day in this world. That there is such analogy is clear and self-evident, and it is needless to cite cases or go into details of the well-known fact, that illness and suffering are produced by dissipation and evil living, and poverty and sorrow result from misconduct. We can therefore deduce, from our experience of individual cases, that revelation speaks true when it tells us that all the pain,

sorrow, and suffering we see on earth results from sin, and sin only.

But if pain and death result from sin, we shall find, as we might expect, that they are developed in only a very modified form in unintelligent existences. The pang of death is common to all, and in all we may conclude that it is accompanied by pain; but apart from this momentary suffering, how great is the enjoyment and happiness of organised beings! Who can look at the myriad gnats dancing in the sunbeams, the busy ants plying their vocation, the bees humming with pleasure as they suck the honey from the flowers, the placid flock, the ruminating herd, and not feel that though each of these animals has doubtless his portion of suffering (and we can detect it in many cases), yet how immensely, how immeasurably, happiness and enjoyment predominate? Hence we should gather, from the analogy of nature, what is revealed to us as being the case, that these phenomena, sorrow, pain, and death, are subordinate to and in the power of a good and gracious God, whose mercy is over all His works; we should feel that though permitted by God, for His good purposes—purposes that we cannot understand—yet they are not allowed to spoil, though they may mar, the boon of happiness and enjoyment that the Creator has bestowed on His creatures,—that they are incidents, are exceptions, joy, gladness, and content being the rule.

When we look into our own hearts and consciences, we shall see how little there is that we

suffer that does not result from sin; we shall find that in many, or even most cases, we can trace the suffering to the sin that caused it; and hence we may conclude that the analogy of natural and revealed religion is in this case complete. That sin caused all suffering and death we may infer to be the case, because it is within our experience that it constantly does cause it. That, notwithstanding the existence of evil, the world we inhabit and the universe we survey are the work of an infinitely good and merciful God, we may conclude from the immense predominance of beauty in nature, and joy and happiness in animated beings. And so it is revealed to us in the Bible; and in this instance again our own consciences and intellects, as well as the analogy of nature, tell us that the Bible revelation is true.

It is revealed to us, fourthly, in Scripture, that this world is a place of trial or probation, and that hereafter every man will be judged according to his deeds, the good being rewarded, the evil punished. Such is the revelation of the justice and judgement of God; the revelation of His infinite mercy and love in the work of Redemption we will consider separately under the fifth head.

The analogy of this future state of rewards and punishments with what we find in the world, follows very much from the last consideration. The conscience of man tells him that sin is hateful, and his understanding tells him that it is productive of much of the pain, sorrow, and misery

he sees around him, yet he observes that sin is not always unsuccessful, nor is it always punished in this world. This alone would cause him to infer that the state of things here below is not final, and as his reason and conscience have assured him that all will ultimately be fair and right, he feels that there will be another state hereafter in which these apparent discrepancies will be adjusted with unerring equity. This is one of those moral truths implanted in the breast of man, which have at all times, and in all countries, satisfied his conscience, influenced his conduct, and stood out prominently in his religious creed. We find it in the oldest idolatry of which we know anything, the religion of the ancient Egyptians; we find it in the idealised sensual creed of Greece, in the religion of our German ancestors, and, in fact, the idea is involved in every form of worship, ancient and modern.* Hence, when we find the doctrine of rewards and punishments in a future state revealed in the Bible, we have a right to say that in this case also revealed and natural religion are symmetrical, and that a strict and complete analogy exists between them.

We may at this place diverge for a short space

* The modern Chinese are perhaps the people in whom these great moral truths are most faint and indistinct; but in their paper-burning worship of their ancestors the feeling of the immortality of the soul is involved; and the return to their homes being a privilege of the souls of the good, shadows out the doctrine of future rewards and punishments.

from our review of the argument by analogy in reference to the Scriptures, and consider the objections that have been raised against the system of moral government by rewards and punishments itself. Certain writers have raised objections to the system *ab initio*, affirming it to be too roundabout to emanate from God. They argue thus: that future punishment is unnecessary, because it would be, in their opinion, simpler to prevent a man from sinning, than to punish him for having sinned. This objection to Christianity is simply an objection to the world as it is, and merely an assumption that the writers who thus argue could have arranged it better. No doubt, if we suppress freedom of thought altogether, we should get rid of sin, and with it of the necessity of punishment; but is it certain that creatures thus constituted, whose every thought was suggested to them, and who were therefore not at liberty to reject the good and choose the evil, would be capable of that degree of love and gratitude, and even virtue, that we can conceive may hereafter be reached by beings who have passed through the fire of temptation, helped by the Spirit of God, and cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, but who also have done their part, and exercised their own freewill, to reject the evil and to choose the good? May it not be necessary for the highest glory hereafter, that a soul in this maze of temptation should have answered with his own freewill to the summons, 'Who is on the Lord's side, who?'

But, after all, the basis of all this questioning is very simple: it is that man cannot harmonise free-will and omnipotence, and yet there is no doubt that both exist; that man is a free agent, and as such liable to be punished for his misdeeds; and that it is one of the acts of God's omnipotence to allow man to have that freewill. We may think we can see a motive for this in a higher range of virtue, and a nobler song of praise to God, than could be achieved by, or arise from, a world of mental and bodily puppets. But this is merely a speculation; to the question of the truth or otherwise of the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, revelation enables us to give a sure answer to those who believe the Scriptures. To the unbeliever it would only be necessary to point to the analogy of nature, and to the testimony of the human conscience.

The next question that occurs to us, fifthly, is the great mystery of Redemption. It is one of the evils of controversial writing and reading, that we are compelled to discuss and analyse, as subjects of philosophical speculation and enquiry, truths and mysteries, at the very name and thought of which no ideas save those of thankfulness, love, and adoration ought to possess our minds. Where we ought to fall down and worship, there we are compelled to argue and discuss. At the same time, there is a compensation to this evil. Times of great controversy have also been times of great faith. It was during the furious storm of con-

troversy that the Reformation martyrs went to the stake, and it is impossible not to see that the onslaughts of infidelity in the last century have resulted in that increase of faith and works, evidenced by the millions of Bibles issuing from our presses, so that all nations, each in his own language, may read the wonderful works of God. May all future attacks from open enemies and false friends result in our studying more and more for ourselves the Word of God! If we do so, we shall more and more value and cherish the Holy Book.

It has pleased God to appoint a Mediator, Jesus Christ, through whom alone He will be, and is, reconciled to sinful man. Can we trace in the natural world any analogy to this dispensation as revealed to us in the Scriptures? Perhaps the simplest and best analogy is the one that first occurs to us. It is our experience in life, from infancy upwards, that when a man cannot do anything for himself he applies to some one else, either to help him, or else to do it for him. The idea is natural to us, and is the visible cause of all the work done, learning acquired, and results obtained in the world. We find the Mediatorial dispensation in perfect analogy with this simple natural fact. Man stood before God powerless and helpless, he possessed no means whatever of atoning for or obliterating past, present, or future sins; it would seem, therefore, that either all mankind must be totally lost, or else sin must be overlooked (in which case the system of rewards and punishments, and even the sinful-

ness of sin, would come to an end), or else man must be helped to do it, or, lastly, it must be done for him. As man could do *nothing whatever* * in the matter himself, the first and the last became the only alternatives; and as none but God Himself could remove or atone for sin, we observe at once a direct analogy of natural and revealed religion in the Mediatorial dispensation, the Son of God mediating between God and man.

It being our object in this and the three following chapters to give an outline of the arguments in favour of the Bible, it will be desirable, before we conclude the argument from analogy, to ascertain how far it applies to one or two of what are commonly called the difficulties of Scripture.

We cannot commence our consideration of these difficulties better than by calling the attention of the reader to the well-known passage from Origen quoted by Bishop Butler.† The great Father of the Church observes that '*he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of nature;*' 'and,' adds the Bishop, 'in a like way of reflection, he who denies the Scripture to have been from God

* Freewill does not help us here in the least. If I owe you 50*l.*, and keep constantly increasing my debt; if, besides, I have no means of repaying one farthing, although from my heart I may love, esteem, and reverence you, and be anxious to serve you, this will not make me one whit less your debtor.

† Analogy, Introduction, p. iv.

on account of these difficulties may, for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by Him.' The greatest of these difficulties arising severally from the contact of the Infinite with the finite, of omniscience and omnipotence with the patent and sensible facts, that sin exists and that man exercises freewill, have already been considered in this chapter, and have been shown to be altogether beyond and beside the intellect and faculties of man, and that therefore all speculation about them is in itself fatuous and useless. There are, however, minor difficulties, and these, though we cannot *explain them*, a little consideration will show to be analogous to similar difficulties that we meet with in nature, and upon the principle laid down by Origen (which commends itself to our common sense), we shall see that such analogy, if it does exist, is a sound argument in favour of the credibility of Scripture. We will take, as an example of these difficulties, three of the best known and most celebrated questions: firstly, that the revelation of God to man should be now, and should always have been, partial; secondly, that God should exercise that immediate ingerence in the affairs of the world that we call Special Providence; thirdly, that revelation should have been attested by miracles.

We will proceed to consider the first question, the objection raised against Christianity that it is partial.

If we look this *objection* fairly in the face, we shall

see that it involves the idea that revelation is not a gift of God, but a sort of right (if we may use such a term) of all mankind. If it be a gift of God, there is an end of all difficulty as far as analogy is concerned, for we see that all God's earthly gifts are in fact partial, and therefore, by analogy, His gifts of revelation should be the same. Not only are the gifts of wealth and comfort, family and friends, very unequally distributed in this world, but intellect and knowledge, and the means of acquiring knowledge, follow the same law; and if we go on in the scale higher and higher still, we find even moral gifts, freedom from temptation, early education and training, are very partial, and confined to comparatively few. Why, then, should we expect the gift of revelation to follow a different law? Because we do not consider it a gift, but a right. Here it is that the confusion arises; we may use the term *right* in a certain sense, that, namely, in which we may say that man has a right to air, water, and food, simply, in fact, meaning that he cannot exist without these gifts of God. But God has provided, in Conscience, the analogous spiritual food to which man has a right. This is equally distributed over the world, and is the portion of every human being that inhabits it; it is 'by the light that is in them' that men will be judged at last,—by what they know, not by what they know not, and that with supreme, certain, and absolute equity. We are not, therefore, at liberty to argue that a fuller revelation is not true, because it is not the portion of all,

any more than that there is no eyesight because the blind see not, no hearing because the deaf hear not. We may, if we like, be atheists, and believe in no God at all; but if we believe in God, the Creator and Author of nature, this fact of the unequal distribution of His best gifts here below, must, from our own knowledge and experience, be accepted as one of the fundamental laws of His government; and, therefore, that that best of all God's gifts, the knowledge of Himself, His laws, and His dealings with man, should follow the same law, ought not to make us marvel and disbelieve, but should rather satisfy us that the analogy of nature holds in that as in so many other points.

Apart from analogy, the moral point of view of the question is evident; this great *gift* of the knowledge of revelation involves *great responsibilities*: that *we* should have been selected to be recipients of this great gift should 'give us pause' when disposed to cavil that others have it not, and, questioning our own hearts how we have used it, rather repeat to ourselves the words of the Apostle, 'Be not high-minded, but fear.'

The second in order of our scriptural difficulties is that of harmonising God's government of the world by general laws with what He has revealed to us of His ingerence in the affairs of men by Special Providence. It is well and truly remarked by Mansel,* 'that, for man's training in this life, the

* Bampton Lectures, p. 192.

conceptions of General Law and Special Providence are both equally necessary; the one that he may labour for God's blessings, the other that he may pray for them.' We see thus clearly the *working* of the two ideas held simultaneously; and if we interrogate our own minds, we shall find that we derive the idea of God acting by general laws from our daily, weekly, and yearly experience of what happens in this world—light and darkness, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, impressing this truth upon us from our earliest years. From what, then, do we derive our idea of Special Providence, apart from the direct allusions to it in revelation? Why, clearly from the Personality of God; for if He exists at all, these laws are as much His workmanship as the creatures and elements that obey them. Hence, as He is not, and cannot be, subject to and bound by the work of His own hands, men at all times have felt that He can, if He will, interfere specially in their favour.

The idea of Special Providence as antagonistic and opposite to the idea of fate, pervades every prayer we offer up to God. Hence, as man has been created with a mind compelled by its very nature to worship and pray, just as his body is to eat and breathe, we find that the analogy of natural and revealed religion exists in this case also. As we see that God acts by laws in the physical universe, so He has revealed to us that He acts by laws in the moral universe; as we find that man's nature compels him

to pray for special blessings, so we find in revelation that such prayers, when properly offered, are right and acceptable, and will be heard.

The last in order of Scripture difficulties is the much-vexed question of miracles,—a question upon which more inane and empty sophistry has been penned than perhaps any in the whole circle of human discussion. Here we have nothing to do with the general question, but only with the subordinate one,—How far is it analogous to what we see in the world, that God should occasionally, for purposes of His own, suspend and interfere with the course of the physical laws that He Himself has established? In considering this question, we must remember that analogy and experience are different things. There is no reason from analogy why earthquakes should not prevail as much in England as they do in Peru or Chili, but experience tells us that they do not. So, again, there is no reason from analogy why Germans should not speak French, but experience tells us they do not. Inverting the argument, therefore, the fact that neither we nor our forefathers have any experience of miracles, will not enable us to argue from *analogy* that miracles have not existed, and may not exist again. We must look farther and deeper than simple experience, before we can assert that the analogy of natural and revealed religion fails in the matter of miracles. The real question at issue is, whether God is subordinate to His laws, or whether

His laws are subordinate to His will.* The analogy of nature in physical matters teaches us that if we can make, we can also break, and as we are only considering the physical question of miracles (the spiritual question is involved in the argument on Special Providences), sound analogy would induce us to extend this power to the Primeval Cause, the Creator of the universe. If we do so, all argument from analogy against miracles ceases at once; on the contrary, the argument is all in their favour, and in this case, as in those we have previously considered, the analogy of natural and revealed religion is complete.

We have now finished our sketch of the argument by analogy. We have shown that revealed religion, both in its leading doctrines and also in its most prominent difficulties, is analogous to, and in harmony with, natural religion; that therefore there exists no *primâ facie* reason for supposing the Author of the one to be different from the Author of the other; but, on the contrary, good and sound grounds for concluding that they emanate from the same Divine Being. As was, however, stated at first, the argument from analogy is not and does not profess to be *conclusive*, it is essentially a *pioneer* argument, clearing the way and enabling us to arrive, with minds favourably impressed, at what is after all the visible basis of our faith—the question of Christian evidences. The importance of the argu-

* See note at end.

ment, then, is this: if fairly gone into and considered, it satisfies us that there is nothing improbable, nothing repellant to our reason, nothing incredible in revelation; that, on the contrary, revelation so resembles, both in its simple intelligible doctrines and also in its mysteries and difficulties, the system of moral government that we see established in this world, that it *may* (and there is no reason it should not) have come directly to man from the Creator of the universe. That it did so come it is the business of Christian evidences to establish. It will be seen, therefore, that the province of analogy, as has been stated, is to clear the way and leave the mind free to entertain the question, 'What proof have I that revelation came from God?—there being nothing in the Bible to make me think that it did not come from Him, but, on the contrary, sound reasons, from its analogy to what I see in nature, for inducing me to suppose that it did.'

The power of the argument from analogy is greatly increased when points of detail are scrutinised and compared; it gains strength by being gone into thoroughly; and it must not be supposed that the slight sketch that has been given at all conveys the real and hidden force that it possesses when fully and accurately followed out. The purpose, however, of the present work is to offer broad views and broad views only; to remind the Christian reader of what he believes, and why he believes; and, when the overwhelming evidence of the truth of the Bible is fresh in his mind, to ask him how he ought to

read, and how to regard, that blessed gift of God. Such being the object of the present volume, it has been necessary to sketch only the outline, and not to stray into the details of an argument which, treat it broadly or minutely, cannot fail to be satisfactory, if not actually convincing, to the Christian believer.

CHAPTER III.

THE BIBLE ITS OWN WITNESS.

Literary Singularity of the Bible — Its varied Books — Its Spiritual Monotony — Divides itself into Three Epochs — The Creative Epoch — Analysis of the Solar Spectrum — Monotone of the Creative Epoch — of the Redemptive Epoch — of the Spiritual Epoch — The Three Epochs testify to the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity — Suitableness of the Bible for a Revelation — Its Simplicity — Its Conciseness — Its Interest — Its Clearness — Gradual Development of Scripture Knowledge — Scripture Preservation — Codex Vaticanus — Scripture Abnegation of Self — Its Fragmentary Treatment — Chapter and Verse.

THE heading of the present chapter at once suggests the question, How can the Bible be its own witness? Surely, after all that has gone before, we are not about to sit in judgement, and call the Bible before us to state its case? Gently, good reader. You are so used in these days to see the Bible put upon the *defensive*, to read page upon page of supercilious and almost, if not quite, contemptuous comment upon the imaginary issue always raised,

Reason *versus* Faith,
or Reason *versus* The Bible,

that it is necessary again to remind you that the question we are considering is the more simple one,

The Bible *versus* Modern Criticism.

In this point of view, the Bible being, as it were, the plaintiff in the case, we may, without either arrogance or assumption on our part, or any want of respect or deference to the Holy Book, head our chapter, 'The Bible its own Witness.'

It will be apparent to anyone who has read or thought on controversy, and whose mind has taken its tone from his reading, how necessary it is to recur over and over again to this our point of view. From the time of Paley and Watson much excellent and sound theology has been published, in which the authors were compelled, by the defensive nature of their argument, to write in a humble apologetic tone; and many a simple-minded Christian, ignorant of Greek, has been scandalised by the mere name of 'Watson's Apology for the Bible.' Moreover, even at the present time by the champions who, like M'Caul, the authors of 'Aids to Faith,' the Bishop of London, Professor Mansel, and many others, are soundly and learnedly doing battle for the faith, this apologetic and defensive tone is necessarily and insensibly assumed: 'Enquiry must not be checked;' 'Reason must not be oppressed;' and even the claims of Baron Bunsen to possess a sagacity, learning, and power of intellectual vision above humanity, must not be questioned. But, happily, our path does not lie in this intricate and thorny maze;

it is the privilege of the unlearned that they are not bound to enter upon or consider these questions; but, leaving the small matters of various readings and doubtful translations (few, indeed, and trifling *in fact*, though often magnified into formidable obstacles by unbelievers) to be solved and settled by the learned,* they content themselves with that which alone is within their intellectual vision, the broad features, the hills and valleys, the downs and rivers, of the Bible landscape.

Our consideration, then, of the Bible will go to establish, first, its literary singularity,—it stands alone and by itself among the books of the world; secondly, its spiritual and doctrinal uniformity, (*monotony* would be the proper word, if habit had not distorted its meaning from its primitive and derivative significance); thirdly, its adaptation to the wants of man, its wonderful suitableness for the purposes of a revelation; fourthly, its preservation.

In considering, firstly, the literary singularity of the Bible, we may well repeat and affirm that it

* Grotius, in his chapter *de Mutata Scriptura*, defines, in a few words, so lucidly and comprehensively, the real extent and bearing of the various-reading question, that we are tempted, at the risk of being thought old-fashioned, to extract the passage. 'Fatendum est, ut aliis libris, ita his quoque accidere potuisse, accidisse etiam, ut excriptorum incuria aut perversa cura literæ quædam, syllabæ, verba mutarentur, omitterentur, adderentur. At vero dolo aut alio quovis modo omnia exempla vitiata, et quidem in iis quæ ad dogma aut insigne aliquod historiæ caput pertinerent, nunquam probabitur.'—Grotius, *de Ver.*, lib. iii. sec. 15.

stands alone among the books of the world. We are so used to the well-known volume, the sound of its strong healthy Saxon English is so familiar to our ears, it brings with it so many memories of our childhood, of those that have gone before us, it strikes within our hearts so loud a chord of love and hope, or else, may be, of sorrow and shame, that perhaps it has never occurred to us to consider what a literary marvel, what a singular and solitary phenomenon of literature, the Book presents; so that even were our candid critics to be able to establish their point, that the Bible is no more to be believed than Homer,* it would still remain the most curious and wonderful book in existence, singular and solitary, and utterly unlike any work of man, except the fictions and plagiarisms that have been copied from and constructed after itself.

The fact that our translation of the Bible was written all at one time, and that at a period when the Latin element was far less conspicuous in our language than it is at present, has doubtless had a great effect in inducing us to consider it as *one Book*, and to overlook, what is its first striking peculiarity, that it is in itself a library of Books. We must then recall to mind that the Bible consists of sixty-six Books, written ostensibly by thirty-seven different authors, and if we include the many writers whose united authorship has produced the Books of Kings, Chronicles and Psalms, doubtless we should

* See Colenso, Pentateuch, p. 17, note.

be justified in greatly increasing that number; that this collection of books was written at intervals during a perod of sixteen hundred years; that it was written by persons in every grade and position of life; that it was not only written in a language whose dialect, like that of all other languages, varied, but was even written in two distinct and peculiarly opposite and estranged languages; that the circumstances under which it was written were as diverse as the strange diversity of its authors.

We could go on with this catalogue of peculiarities, but it is time to draw breath and consider again for a moment what we have just said. Let us afterwards look at our own bookshelves and try and imagine what such a collection would amount to now; but before we do this we must again refer to the Bible, and enquire how many different *sorts of books* it contains. We shall find a variety that will astonish us as greatly as the variety of authors: we shall find Law, History, Prophecy peculiar to the Bible; Poetry (didactic and lyric); Biography, Narrative, Letters; and the authors we shall find to be a lawgiver, like Solon or Alfred; a general, like Marlborough or Wellington; a conquering active king, like Napoleon; a literary learned king, like Frederick the Great; and so through the different grades and professions down to a herdsman; the whole terminated by biographies, a narrative, a series of letters, and a vision, written, amongst others, by a lawyer, a physician, a tax-gatherer, and sundry fishermen. Imagine, then, how strange a mixture such

a series and collection of books and authors would amount to in our modern bookshelves. There would be the law-books of Bracton and Fleta; the chronicles of Froissart and Holinshed; Chaucer and Milton, our modern biographies and collections of letters, would all combine to swell the list. Wellington's or Marlborough's despatches might represent the Book of Joshua, but where should we find a counterpart for David and Solomon, except perhaps by travelling into foreign literature and pressing into our service Napoleon and Frederick? Can anything be more unlike the Bible than such a mass? Could it be compressed into any volume, however large, or into any definite substance, however crude? Who could extract any semblance of doctrine or principle from *tanti farrago libelli* ?

These considerations, if we will candidly and fairly entertain them, must convince us that the Bible is a literary phenomenon of the most singular description, and the more we study the details of the several books, the more we shall be convinced that when the sceptic calls upon us to conclude that the Bible is merely like any other book, and that the kings, poets, lawgivers, and historians who composed it, during a period equal to nearly one quarter of the earth's duration in its present form, wrote, as children say, out of their own heads, he requires us to believe in a miracle as great as, if not greater than, any narrated in the Sacred Volume. This 'miracle' is, that such writers, writing at such intervals, and under such circumstances, should

have produced the Book now lying on the table before us; a Book for all time; the mental and spiritual food of old and young, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, half the world over, for 1800 years. Faith, which beholds in these writers the active instruments of a great design of Providence for the salvation of man, does not tax our power of belief as does scepticism when it places the Book before us and says, 'Believe that volume to be the result of chance; believe that its authors, writing falsehoods ("unhistorical narratives" it is the fashion to call them now), yet succeeded in penning that volume, painfully elaborating, century after century, each his little quota of myths.'

Although in fact, as was observed just now, the Bible is a collection of books written at intervals during many centuries by a great number of authors, themselves as dissimilar as possible, yet, somehow or other, we cannot divest ourselves of the feeling that it is *one* book. This is, in a great degree, to be attributed to its being the history of one people, and still more, to the fact that it is pervaded throughout by one spirit. The spiritual monotone, the key-note of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the one God, Jehovah, the Creator, pervades the volume from the first line to the last, and causes the sense of spiritual consistency throughout with which we rise from its reverent perusal. The Book, though one in spirit, yet may be simply divided for consideration into three epochs: the *Creative* epoch, comprised in the first six days

of creation, detailed in the first and second chapters of Genesis; secondly, the *Redemptive* epoch, extending from the commencement of the seventh day of rest from creation until that day of Pentecost on which the Holy Spirit, visibly descending from heaven on men, inaugurated, thirdly, the purely *Spiritual* dispensation under which we now live.

We find the first of these periods essentially miraculous—the miracle of creation—and nothing else. We find the record of it in the Sacred Book short and concise; fit to satisfy the simple-minded illiterate population of the early periods of the world's history, fit also to be a guide to the master-minds of the world's maturity and old age. During the centuries that have elapsed from the world's creation up to the infancy of many now living, developed geological science in Scripture would have been pearls before swine, or rather, a stumblingblock in the way of faith (the second and stronger being, in fact, the more accurate simile); therefore, in a revelation intended for the youth, maturity, and old age of the human race, developed science was not given. But what was given was absolutely true; and hence the light of science, as year by year it grows stronger, so year by year it tends to show us a second and hidden meaning in what it has pleased God to reveal to us of primeval time. As has ever been the case, the first investigators of geology, when they had found a little, thought they had found all; but while they

over-hastily jumped at conclusions, they could not help being struck by the fact that the organic types of the successive epochs of the world's crust corresponded with the order in which their creation is enumerated in Genesis, beginning with the zoophytes and molluscs, the moving creature that hath life that the waters brought forth abundantly, through the fishes, reptiles, and birds, up to the highest organised type of the mammals. How different this from the fond inventions of humanly devised revelations! How wonderful must it seem to an unbeliever who compares the simple record even with Homeric mythology, and who remembers while he does so that the Book is 800 years older than Homer! But, as we said just now, the early geologists having found a little, thought they had found all; they acknowledged, indeed, that there was a remarkable prescience exhibited in the Bible account of the *order* of creation, but they said, We do not find everything exactly as it should be, we cannot account for this or that item of discovery, we suspect the whole narrative is a myth, and we see it must be so, for this simple reason, that *light* is made the first day, and yet it is not until the fourth day that God said 'Let there be *lights* in the firmament of the heaven *to divide the day from the night*; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth;' and that 'God *made two great lights*; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light

to rule the night: he made the stars also.' Now, they continued to argue, this cannot possibly be true. We know light to emanate from a luminous atmosphere, surrounding the sun, and other similar sidereal bodies, and we can see clearly that in the order of creation the sun must have been made before vegetable life existed, or light could be said to be.

This reasoning no doubt tried the faith of many; yet many said, We are sure your conclusions are wrong, and yet we cannot see how; we believe the Bible, and are satisfied that time will prove it to be true. They have not had long to wait; for modern science has already proved that this statement of the Bible may be, and probably (the believer will say *certainly*) is, true. Two German mathematicians, Messrs. Kirchhoff and Bunsen*, were recently making experiments on the solar spectrum. By solar spectrum, we mean the result obtained by breaking up a ray of white light, or, in other words, that phenomenon we often have shown to us in Nature's grand experiment of natural philosophy, the rainbow. Fifty years ago, Frauenhofer had found in the spectrum of sunlight formed by a prism, a number of dark lines, and greatly was he puzzled to explain them. Kirchhoff and Bunsen examined the spectrum through powerful

* For a full and interesting account of the experiments of Messrs. Kirchhoff and Bunsen, see the Essay by M. Auguste Laugel, 'Revue des Deux Mondes,' vol. xxxvii. p. 402.

microscopes, and found that Frauenhofer's lines were only the most prominent out of a multitude, 'several thousands,' that really existed in the spectrum, and that when a ray of sunlight was examined, these lines were always to be found in the same places. They commenced a series of experiments, with a view to find out, if possible, what was to be learned from these lines, and greatly were they delighted and astonished when they discovered that each *set of lines* represented the burning, or rather the presence of the flame caused by the burning, of some metal or substance identical with those we possess on earth. The first result of this was to prove that the sun is a body similar to our earth as to the materials that compose it; but the next deduction was far more startling—it was that the sun is in a state of burning, and that the light and heat that come to us are caused by actual *combustion.* Here, indeed, was a discovery,—*the sun on fire*, and therefore *burning up* the material of which it is composed. We will not go into the realm of speculation thus opened; into the question, 'How is this expenditure of combustible material supplied?' or the suggested answer, that the atmosphere that we know surrounds the sun and which we call the zodiacal light, is a huge reservoir of aeroliths that keep falling into the sun — that, in fact, it serves to 'put the coals on'— but we will rather enquire, Do these results explain to us more than we could before understand of the history of creation revealed by God? Do they in any degree

enlighten us upon what is often irreverently termed the Mosaic cosmogony? Our answer is, that they entirely change our previous notions as to the origin of light and heat. They prove that the sun is not inherently or essentially light and heat-giving; that there may have been, or rather, must have been, a period when it was simply a dark mass, before it was set on fire or lighted up; that supposing the earth and moon to be rotating as they now are round the dark mass of the sun, the effect of setting the sun on fire, or lighting it up, would be that the two lights would appear almost simultaneously in the heavens, for the moon, only shining by reflected light, would at once answer back the light from the sun. They prove, further, that such lighting up of the sun might justly be said to *divide* the day from the night; for the twenty-four hour rotation existing before, the division into real night and day would be the only change caused by the sun becoming a centre of light. Thus they explain the meaning of the words, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven.' For the words are not, as men have unwarrantably concluded, Let there be luminous bodies, or massive bodies, or bodies of any kind, but 'Let there be lights.' What may have been the centre of light of that light mentioned in Genesis i. 3, we cannot tell,* or how long it pre-

* The desert surface of the moon, the traces of fire it displays in every part, the absence of water and of any gaseous

vailed; but we know for certain that our present centre of light is temporary, that it had a beginning when it was set on fire, that it is wasting day by day, and that all the *certainties* of the science of even three years ago as to the luminous atmosphere, &c., were simply fond imaginations. If, then, we reflect that 'lights' do not mean solid masses, but truly lights; and further, that there is a strong probability that the sun's incandescence is not a condition that has endured from vastly remote ages; and the necessary inference that our present temporary source of light may have been preceded by some other equally temporary, or by light bestowed in some other way; all these accumulated considerations will convince us that the beginning of the first chapter of Genesis, as well as the middle and end, may, without any let or hindrance from science, be strictly true.

The discussion of this remarkable additional evidence to the truth of Scripture might perhaps have more properly been reserved until the next chapter, where the question of Christian Evidences will be considered; but the beginning of the Book of Genesis has so long been a mark for 'daws to peck at,' that it was impossible to refrain from bringing it forward on the first occasion when the course of our

atmosphere, all seem to suggest the query, May not our satellite have been the primary source of light? It would have given light and darkness, morning and evening; it would not have marked *seasons* or *years* at all, or even days with anything like uniformity.

argument brought the history of creation under review. It had, for so many years, been taken for granted that the sun was essentially heat and light-giving, that it was surrounded by a luminous atmosphere, &c., that the *proof* that it is merely a burning body that must at some time or other have been set on fire, and that must also, in course of time, burn itself out, came like a thunder-clap on the astronomers, and completely upset all their preconceived opinions. It is worth remarking, that this discovery has been made at a time when unbelief is holding high its head, and when, perhaps, the faith of many may be faltering; and it is also a curious coincidence, that M. Bunsen should be one of those philosophers whose careful and intricate observations have established this great and important truth, rendering thereby a service to revelation that will far more than compensate for the voluminous mystifications of his celebrated namesake.

To return from our digression, the question we are now considering is the key-note of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, as shown in the first or *Creative* epoch. The world we see with all its beauty and happiness, is evidence that cannot be gainsaid, and that world is the one great tangible result before us of the work of that period.

The second period, which we have called the Redemptive, will be found to glorify God in the same tone throughout; but, in considering how this period shows forth the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, we must take a broad view of what is, in

fact, the leading feature of the Bible revelation. Beginning, as has been said, at the commencement of the seventh day of rest, it ends when the Lord Jesus returned to His Father in heaven. If we remember this, and discard from our minds the division of Old and New Testament by which our ideas are often confused and led astray, we shall at once recognise that the great idea of redemption, that idea in the fulfilment of which it culminates, is also *the one idea* that pervades every page and every line of the inspired text. Looked at in this light, we recognise the Jewish people and their history to be merely brought before us as the nation from which the Messiah, the Son of the woman who was hereafter to bruise the serpent's head, was in future times to spring. That nation *must* be kept free from idolatry, it *must* preserve the worship of the true God, and yet the freewill of every individual Jew of the millions composing it must be respected. Hence its future career in a world full of idolatry, must be made *easier* by the idolatrous nations of the land being exterminated before its face; hence, also, national judgements upon itself must startle backsliders, and make them return to the true religion. Hence, wars, and famines, and captivities, must recall to them that law which was but their pedagogue to bring them to Christ. It is impossible to impress this view too deeply or too forcibly on the mind, that every individual of the Jewish nation was as free to select the evil and reject the good as is anyone of us at the present

moment; and yet the whole nation, made up of an aggregate of individuals, each a free agent, must, in fulfilment of God's decree to bless and save mankind, be kept free from idolatry in an absolutely and entirely idolatrous world. How uniform, how simple, how intelligible, does the plan of Scripture history appear to us when read in this light! When we look at ourselves, our neighbours, our children, we no longer wonder at the perverseness and insubordination of the Israelites in the wilderness. We no longer wonder at the faults of the patriarchs, for they were men like ourselves; and where is the man among us, even with our fuller knowledge, who will venture to cast the first stone? We see, in the commanded extermination of the Canaanites, the only means by which the *Jewish nation* could have been isolated and prevented from falling into idolatry, or becoming merged among the millions of their idolatrous neighbours. Prone as is the human heart to image-worship, it was necessary that a great temptation should be removed, and a great example should be given. But all these dispensations are but the basement story of an edifice whose crown was to be the salvation of man by the incarnation, life on earth, death, and ascension of the Son of God.

If the Gospel biographies of Jesus Christ are grafted on to that dispensation which was the necessary condition-precedent of His advent, we are able to appreciate the greatness of God's work throughout, and at the same time we are able to set at their proper value the short-sighted cavils of men at the

steps by which He judged it necessary to accomplish a result of such infinite moment. We know that every man, be he Midianite, or be he Amalekite, will at the last day be judged with unerring equity, and we see no ground for cavil in that God thought right to remove those nations in bringing about a result as important to each individual Midianite or Amalekite as it is to anyone of ourselves. The true believer thus reading the Holy Book will not grudge to prophecy that it tells of the Messiah—will not labour to explain away the testimony of prophecy to Christ; for he will feel that if prophecy did not tell of Christ, or did not narrate to us some link in the chain of history of the Jewish people—that peculiar people set apart that Christ might be born among them—prophecy would not be where it is. No; the Redemptive epoch is essentially *one*, the Gospels are but the conclusion of the Old Testament, and half our errors, and more than half of our irreverent fault-finding, arises from our wilfully putting asunder what God has joined together. No loophole is left to us for dividing the historical from the doctrinal portions of Holy Writ, if we reflect that the history of the nation from whom Christ sprung is but the earlier chapters of the history of Christ Himself. What, then, is the key-note of the Redemptive epoch? It is a note that pervades the announcement (Genesis iii. 15), the preparation,* the predictions, the fulfilment; it is the great

* See Prof. J. J. Blunt's Hulsean Lectures for 1834, passim.

mystery of Redemption itself. And if this be the note, surely it may be termed, what we have before named it, the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God.

Lastly, we have to consider what is the key-note of that portion of Holy Scripture which constitutes the revelation of the third epoch; that which takes its name from its leading feature, the descent at Pentecost and continual abiding of the Holy Spirit among men. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles, the collection of letters we call the Epistles, and the Revelation of St. John the Divine, are the portion referred to. It is contrary to the plan of the present work to cull a text here and a text there in support of the broad views put forth; the object being rather to induce the reader to question his own mind, looking at the Bible broadly, whether these things be so. No one who looks thus broadly at the Epistles and Revelation of St. John, will for a moment question the fact, that from the first chapter to the last, through the length and breadth, height and depth of them, they tell forth clearly the same key-note —the wisdom, power, and goodness of God.

We have thus endeavoured to trace through Holy Writ that uniformity of spirit that moulds into *one book* a series of works as varied as the lapse of centuries, the difference of composition, of subjects, and of authors, could make them. This uniformity of spirit constitutes in itself a striking difference between the Bible and any other series of books, even if they be of the same date and written by

persons in the same profession and class of life. Extending as it does through a series of books, such as we have described the Bible to be, it is a phenomenon so singular as to amount to a powerful argument in favour of the inspiration of the Holy Volume.

Before we proceed to the third head of our argument, the adaptation of the Bible to the nature and wants of man, it will be worth while, for a short time, to reconsider the system we just now adopted of dividing the Bible into three epochs, instead of the usual division of Old and New Testaments. Without going into all the details that the subject suggests, is it not likely that, had the two divisions of God's marking been taken instead of one division merely representing a date of time—had the work of the Creator, the work of the Redeemer, the work of the Comforter, each given, as it were, their name to the epoch of their *especial* manifestation—we might have had less occasion than we have now to deplore the permanence and extension of Socinian or Unitarian error? It would seem that such a division would identify the Bible with what is in truth a doctrine that pervades every portion of it —the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Why should there be any line drawn between the Old Testament and the Gospels? There is no such line in fact; but when redemption was complete, when the Lord Jesus said 'It is finished,' He did indeed draw a line which told that the old dispensation was over, and the new about to commence.

The Bible, as we have it, may be, and is, more convenient for reference; but the convenience does not compensate for the evils caused by an essentially wrong line of demarcation. Is it not possible, for instance, that a Christian Bishop would have paused before he took up his pen, if the very Bible itself had shown him, by the arrangement of its books and text, that when he attacked the truth of Moses he at the same time assailed the Gospel of Christ?

We will now consider, thirdly, the adaptation of the Bible to the nature and wants of man; its peculiar suitableness for the purposes of a revelation. Perhaps the most salient qualities of the Holy Volume may be defined to be, its simplicity, its conciseness, its interest, its clearness. Who ever walked into a cottage, and saw the well-thumbed family Bible, without feeling that, but for this quality of *simplicity*, its place might have been upon the shelf, but would not have been upon the table? There must be in that book, so often read and so well known, something in harmony with the mind of the simple cottager. That harmony is found in its simplicity; foolishness it may be to the intellectually proud, but bread of life to the humble-minded and children in Christ. It has been often and truly remarked, that the minds of the labouring and industrious classes, those that fulfil the first award of man's future destiny and earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, greatly resemble in many points the minds of children. There is a robust faith, a ready acquiescence in God's judge-

ments, a hearty belief in His power to reward and to punish, a certain conviction of His goodness, analogous to the feelings entertained by a child towards his earthly parent. This frame of mind, no doubt, results from the concentration of their thoughts and ideas on the great book of Nature, and, in much-blessed Protestant Christendom, also on the Word of God, to the exclusion, to a great degree, of other mental food. Such simple intellectual appetites require a simple diet; and in the milk of the Word they find a diet fit even for babes.

The Bible, also, is a model of *conciseness*. We do not often reflect how small is the casket that contains this inestimable treasure.* In one volume of moderate size is contained the moral law of God, the history of the Jewish nation, and, for many centuries after creation, the history of the whole human race, the biographies of our Saviour, and, besides all these, the books of prophecy, the foundation of our faith, and the prayers and songs of praise that form the basis of our devotions. We shall be able, perhaps, to better appreciate this conciseness, if we compare the moral law of God with the temporal laws of men. Take, for instance, the 'Statutes at Large' of this realm, with its hundred, or hundred and fifty, ponderous quartos, almost each one larger than the Bible. Take even the most concentrated codes of civil and criminal laws that the genius of man has produced, and compare them with the

* Miall, Basis of Belief.

Bible is the only authorised and true compendium, differs *toto cœlo* from other sciences, and that while they are inexhaustible, yielding up their riches to intelligence and industry, but ever holding in reserve fresh treasures for those who have the ability, energy, and perseverance to seek for them, the Bible yields its last word and surrenders all its secrets to the believer, however ignorant and uninformed. No; the field of enquiry opened by the Bible is as inexhaustible as that offered by mathematics, chemistry, or natural history. There is no fear of our ever getting to the end of these sciences, nor can we suppose that all the hidden truths and mysteries of theology will ever in this world be exhausted. The true point of view on this subject is so ably and forcibly put by Bishop Butler that we cannot resist extracting the passage as the conclusion of this portion of our argument. 'Practical Christianity,' says the Bishop,* 'or that faith and behaviour which renders a man a Christian, is a plain and obvious thing, like the common rules of conduct, with respect to our ordinary temporal affairs. The more distinct and particular knowledge of these things, the study of which the Apostle calls *going on unto perfection*, and of the prophetic parts of revelation, like many parts of natural and even civil knowledge, may require very exact thought and careful consideration. The hindrances, too, of natural and of supernatural light and know-

* Analogy, pp. 212, 213.

ledge have been of the same kind. And as it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down in it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. For all the same phenomena and the same faculties of investigation, from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and last age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before. And possibly it might be intended that events, as they come to pass, should open and ascertain the meaning of several parts of Scripture.'

Lastly, in this witness of the Bible to itself, we must place the book before us, and ask ourselves: Is not the entirety of this Book, its unity, the sequence of its many portions—in a word, its *preservation*—a phenomenon of literature unparalleled in this world; and, if it cannot be said, like the scattered Israelites

at our doors, to constitute a standing miracle, at all events is it not a strong testimony of the Divine protection? It may be said that Homer's 'Iliad' is as perfect; but Homer's 'Iliad,' when once collected and put into writing, had a quiet resting-place in Greece, where it became the basis of a glorious and powerful literature. When this was once the case, its fate was settled; there was no longer any fear of its being lost or forgotten. But a very simple reflection will show us that there is no real resemblance between the cases. Homer was first put into writing by Pisistratus, about B.C. 530, and when once collected and written had a fixed residence, at first among the Athenian people and the Greek nation, afterwards in the libraries of the educated and learned throughout the area of Greek civilisation. It was never lost, nor was it ever carried into captivity with its people. We know, however, that a century before Homer was first written the early books of the Old Testament had been lost and found again. The Books of Moses had been in writing nearly, if not quite, a thousand years before Homer's verses first were put on parchment. When the vicissitudes of these wild times are considered, how strong is the conclusion that these books, as they from time to time were written, were preserved for us by the special interposition and protection of Providence. Yet, as in all His other dealings with man, God's Providence in protecting the Scriptures for us was not shown in such a way as to compel those to believe who preferred to

doubt. No autograph copy, no copy without flaw or error, was preserved by angelic guardians for a standard and metre of all future copies and editions. No; fallible man was employed as the instrument to copy and hand down Divine Truth; and yet how were his mind and his eye overruled, that the Book should be, as we find it, not faultless in mechanical details, not without various readings and slight errors of transcribers, but yet complete in all its parts, satisfying fully the humble believer, and, by its human element enabling the unbeliever to exercise his freewill, and be as competent to ignore God's written Word as he is to defy conscience or to sin against reason. Had, indeed, belief been compulsory, where had been the room for faith, and where also for repentance! It being, then, clear, even to our finite intellects, that in analogy with God's other dealings with man, we had no right to expect a miraculously preserved and guarded standard revelation, in what respect does the Bible differ from, or fall short of, the revelation man might expect (using the term in all due reverence) to receive from God? In the preceding pages we have endeavoured to show, and in the subsequent portion of this volume we shall, with God's help, endeavour further to develope, the claims, intrinsic and external, spiritual and evidential, possessed by the Bible to be such revelation; and we are bound to remember that if the human element, as some assert, be considered to extend to the facts and doctrines of the Holy Book, as well as to its mul-

tiplication, preservation, and dissemination on earth, we do, in fact, by such assertion, deny the Book *to be a revelation of God at all.* The full discussion of this proposition we must postpone until we come to the consideration of certain works of Bible criticism that have recently issued from the press; but its simple statement here was necessary, as our argument had brought us to the consideration of the human element the Book really and truly does involve. It was the privilege of the writer to be allowed, a few months ago, to turn over the pages of the Codex Vaticanus, that priceless treasure of the Vatican Library. There lay before him a manuscript, allowed, on the strongest grounds, to be of the third century of our era, clean, free from corrections or erasures, every letter as carefully formed, as similar and as true as if it had only yesterday issued from the Pitt or Clarendon Press. As the precious manuscript was returned to its bureau, how strongly did the impression stamp itself on his mind that, since the time of Moses, here a bit and there a bit of the Bible had been copied by human hands (for even after the canon of the Old Testament had been established, long manuscripts were too expensive to be numerous), and that each transcriber *must* have exercised the same sort of conscientious accuracy as that shown in the manuscript he had just been surveying, or the volume could not present to us the pure and uncorrupt text we find in it. How clearly does this reflection prove that from the earliest times every transcriber must have sat

down to his task with a feeling of reverence and awe; how plainly does it show the work of Special Providence in this selection of instruments, in this mental and physical restraint of the copyists! Different, indeed, would have been the result had they set about their task in the spirit of modern free-handlers! Thankful, then, we ought to be for the preservation of the Scriptures; and leaving the learned to elucidate, and the sceptical to squabble about, what few verbal inaccuracies there may be in the text, we ought to recognise in a grateful spirit how powerful an argument to their inspiration is presented by the state of preservation in which we find them.

Before we conclude the present chapter, there is one further consideration that forces itself upon us. Our blessed Saviour Himself has said, 'If I bear witness to myself, my witness is not true.' How strongly does the converse of this proposition bear upon the truth of the Bible. To appreciate this fully and fairly, we should disconnect the different books, and then observe how free from egotism are the writers—how free from claims and boasting about their work. There is no *I*, and *my*, and *me*, conspicuously prominent, no faults hidden or slurred over; and for the work itself there is not even the formal claim of inspiration. This complete abnegation, so divine as we know it to be from the statement of our Lord, is patent and evident to that degree that more than one free-thinker has denied the inspiration or justified his attacks upon the Sacred

Volume upon this very ground, that it nowhere *claims* inspiration for itself. To this the believer answers in the words of his Lord, 'If I bear witness to myself, my witness is not true;' and he finds in the fact that inspiration is not claimed for themselves, in words, by the Prophets of the Old, or the Apostles of the New Dispensation, a further proof that that volume which so fully 'commends itself to every man's conscience' is indeed inspired of God.

In shutting and replacing upon the table the Book whose intrinsic claims to be a revelation of the Most High we have been considering, it is impossible to avoid observing the great disadvantages the Bible labours under in consequence of its division into chapters and verses. No other book is cut into arbitrary portions, to a great degree irrespective of the meaning and context; and having been so divided, is then further shredded into small fragments of two or three lines. Let anyone try to treat Clarendon's 'Rebellion,' or Gibbon's 'History' in the same way, and he will be able to appreciate what must be the literary merit of a book that can stand such treatment and yet retain its interest. The paragraph Bible of the Religious Tract Society to a certain degree meets these defects, but even that has faults of its own; the lines are too long, the type too small, and the verse figures, dotted about, make the book spotty and unpleasant. Why not leave out the verses altogether, and print merely the number of the chapter in the margin? Every-

body possesses a chapter-and-verse Bible for reference, and it would be a privilege to be able to read the Scriptures without any trace of that fragmentary treatment that they received at the hands of a king's printer in a posting journey between Paris and Lyons. A copy such as has been hinted at, with lines of comfortable octavo length, fair type, and no verses, would be a real boon to the reading Christian public.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

Magnitude of Subject — Truth of a grave Writer to be presumed — Opposed by the Egyptologists — Historical Evidence, external and internal — External Evidence of the early Books of the Old Testament considered — Evidence of the several Books of Scripture to each other — It is external, not internal Evidence — Miracles recorded, no Ground of Doubt — Other Evidence to the Old Testament Books — Evidence of the Jewish Nation — Evidence of the New Testament to the Old Testament Books — Judaism proves their Genuineness — Christianity proves their Truth — Three-fold Testimony of the New Testament to the Old — Historical Evidence to the Truth of the New Testament — The When and the Where of the Advent of Christ — Evidence of the Truth of Christianity essentially miraculous — Historical Evidence of the Genuineness of the New Testament Books — Writers on Evidences — Paley and Lardner considered — Summary and Conclusion.

THE warning given recently by a high authority in the Church, that deficient knowledge and confused arrangement may injure the cause they are intended to serve, and, as Pitt said of no less a book than Butler's 'Analogy,' may cause more doubts than they cure, presses heavily upon the writer who endeavours to convey, in a limited space, clear and definite though of course condensed ideas as to the nature of the historical evidence of Holy

Scripture, its force, its variety, and its continuous sequence. Evidence of this kind carries conviction to the mind in proportion to the number and variety of the facts adduced, to their accuracy, and to the undesigned nature of the support they offer to each other. It will at once be seen how self-evidently hopeless is the endeavour to furnish even the outline of an argument, in its nature so extensive, so varied, and so full of detail, in many respects so intricate, involving the knowledge of ancient languages, manners, and customs, within the limits of a single chapter. And yet historical evidence, which, next to the witness of the Spirit of God, is the strong foundation of our faith, could not be left unnoticed. An endeavour, therefore, will be made to touch upon a few of the leading features of the subject; and before we do so it will be necessary to state simply one or two of the elementary principles of judging historical evidence.

In the first place, then, when a narrative comes to us written in a grave and serious spirit, and purporting to narrate facts, it is wise and right, *primâ facie*, to believe the author, and then to scrutinise keenly the contents of the book and the evidence by which it is supported. Much Bible criticism is conducted in a spirit the contrary to this; yet it is the simple principle that lies at the bottom of all our jurisprudence, and which we see at work every day in our courts of law: a serious witness is believed to speak the truth until he is proved not to have done so. The *presumption* is always in favour of truth, not

against it. This reads, no doubt, very like asserting a truism; but the modern Egyptological method, as it has been called, by which the learned are re-writing ancient history, sets this simple principle at defiance. Your author is pre-supposed to have a tendency to lying for lying's sake; not merely to exaggerate, but to construct entirely unfounded history. The critic then sets to work to excude from his own brain what it is most probable (in his opinion) that the history might or should have been. The next step is simply to put down the supposed history as certain; and the farce generally ends by its being called by the name of the author whose authority has been rudely and unceremoniously set aside. The principle, therefore, that we have laid down has not been unassailed by the entertainingly self-sufficient writers, who 'restore' history just as we do our old churches; and it became necessary, in consequence, to restate it, inasmuch as our first argument on the historical evidence of the Bible depends mainly on its admission. It is in itself very simple, for it amounts merely to this,— that if you want to find out anything, or prove anything, you must believe what people say. In fact, it involves only that limited amount of faith that every individual exercises every day of his life, and upon which he acts when he credits anything that he has not seen with his own eyes.

We must premise, in the next place, that evidence as affecting books, and especially historical books, is of two kinds, *external* and *internal*,—that derived

from other books, and that obtained by careful reading and collation of the book itself. External evidence may itself be subdivided into contemporaneous evidence, and evidence of a later date than the book itself; in inspired books (and only in them) a third subdivision exists—prophetic or anterior evidence.

Evidence that is not contemporaneous is evidently of varying strength, getting weaker as the lapse of time becomes greater; in fact, we may say that it varies inversely as the interval between the dates of two books.

Now, in considering the *external* historical evidence that bears upon the truth of the Bible, at first sight it might seem that, for the earlier books of the Old Testament, evidence of this kind is altogether wanting; there being not only no book contemporaneous, but, in consequence of the Bible itself containing all the literature that has come down to us from this early period, no book that even follows at a moderate interval of time the portion in question of Holy Writ. All this difficulty, however, disappears, if we remember that the Bible is not one book, but many books, and that, though the whole canon of Scripture claims our unfeigned assent to its truth, yet that the conclusion of credibility arrived at by our minds from many other considerations besides the individual books themselves, does not in reality in any degree modify the right that each book has to appear as evidence in favour of the other books. This reflection will materially alter our opinion as to the quantity and quality of the

external evidence to the truth of these early books, especially to the truth of the five books of Moses. As the acknowledgement of this postulate transforms what may have been considered to be *internal* evidence into what it really is, *external* evidence, it may be well, for the purpose of avoiding misapprehension, to state the argument again in other words. We have before us a series of most ancient books, the earliest literature that in all probability exists (putting in the word 'probability' as a saving clause to satisfy ardent Chinese scholars). These books, embracing in their composition a period from B.C. 1490 to B.C. 400, or about 1100 years, are written by twenty-nine different authors; and some of them, being of the nature of national records, and embracing a long period, have doubtless been written, from time to time, by successive chroniclers. These books are written in a grave and serious spirit, and bear about them the stamp of authenticity, besides being traceable, in the possession of careful custodians, up to a very early period. Now no one, on this statement of the case, would for a moment question that each of these books would be very valuable evidence as to the truth and authenticity of the volumes that preceded it. It would at once be seen that this evidence is not only *very valuable*, but is also the best attainable, there being no contemporary* literature, other and beside the sacred books,

* It may be fairly stated, that the inscriptions found at Nineveh and elsewhere are contemporary testimony, and the

to which we can refer, at all events for the older works. Can it then, with any show of reason, be said, that because these thirty-nine books, written by twenty-nine different persons, at different times, in all stations of life, happen to have become possessed of great authority, and to be believed by a third of the human race to be the Word of God, and in consequence happen to have been printed in a uniform manner, and bound in one volume, that, *therefore*, they are no longer to be considered separate, but one, and the evidence they bear to each other is to be reckoned internal evidence, and not, as it fairly claims to be, external evidence? Why should the

manner in which they are considered to bear on and elucidate Scripture has been ably set forth by Mr. Rawlinson, in his Bampton Lectures for 1859. They refer mainly to the Second Book of Kings, and, as interpreted, agree with the accounts of Manetho and Berosus. The motto, however, on the title of the present volume is a pledge on the part of the writer not to bring forward any argument which does not perfectly satisfy his own mind. He has been unable hitherto to arrive at anything like certainty that these inscriptions have been really deciphered; and as, in consequence, he is not prepared to admit their authority if they opposed Scripture, he does not feel justified in quoting them as an argument in its favour. There are also certain *subsequent* 'authorities' who refer to the Books of Moses, of which a schedule will be found at the commencement of the first chapter of Stanley's 'Jewish Church.' It is difficult to imagine how some of those cited, especially the Mussulman traditions of the Koran, can be considered to prove anything. Further notice of this schedule will be found at Chapter VII., and the reader who considers the subject will probably come to the conclusion that what is stated above, as to the lack of contemporaneous evidence, is strictly true.

being bound in one volume make all this difference? We can plainly see the reason why; it is that so pervaded is the Book throughout by the Spirit of God, that we feel that in fact it is the work of one Divine Author, and that, where such unity of spirit exists, we cannot bring ourselves to consider the books to be single and separate. Now, this spiritual unity itself is the best possible *internal* evidence of inspiration, and will be considered as such in the next chapter; but its existence does not prevent the books from having a right to offer their independent *historical* evidence in each other's favour. If we are perfectly satisfied of the absolute inspiration of every portion of Holy Writ (which, thank God, is the case with the vast majority of the British people), of course there is no necessity for reading or considering the present or any other question of evidence; but, apart from this view of the case, we must allow that the books being generally believed in, and being bound up together, is no good argument for changing into internal evidence what is really sound and satisfactory external evidence. What, then, *ex*: *gr*: is the independent external support offered by subsequent books of Scripture to the truth of the five Books of Moses? The first witness will be the nearest book in point of date, the Book of Joshua, narrating events that happened immediately after the death of Moses, and in which * the commands of that law-

* Josh. viii. 31.

giver are carried out, and his book alluded to by name. Whether, therefore, this book be written by the author whose name it bears or no, it is a grave book, a trustworthy book, it is of a period evidently not long after the Books of Moses, and therefore the testimony it bears to Moses—a testimony which so pervades the book from the first verse of the first chapter to the end, that it is impossible to quote the individual passages—is strong and sound external evidence of the genuineness and truth of those books. The next, again, in date of the series, the Book of Judges and Books of Samuel, teem with allusions to the ark, to the sacrifices, priesthood, and sacred ceremonies, all of which *presuppose* an acquaintance with the Books of Moses, and prove his institutions to have been in existence; for without such acquaintance they would be simply unintelligible. Who, for instance, would have an idea of the meaning of the word 'ark of God' who had not read, or did not know from tradition, Exodus xxv. 10? Hence we find in this, the earliest series of Jewish records, beginning with events only some thirty or forty years after the death of Moses, the fact that his ordinances and his law were in existence, and, further, that a knowledge of things only to be ascertained from his books, and from the obedience paid to them, is throughout *assumed* as general. Surely this is strong external evidence to the truth of these books, and to the fact that, for instance, the ark of the testimony was made in the manner and at the date at which Moses records it

to have been made. We must remember that this is not merely the consistency of a single book, the sort of consistency that is often adduced as an internal argument to truth, but it is the involuntary matter-of-fact testimony of record-writers, who had nothing to gain from the favour of Moses, nothing to fear from his anger, being independent writers recording facts that occurred after his death. This description of testimony we shall find pervading the whole of Scripture, and ultimately corroborated by profane testimony in abundance; perhaps the best and most tangible witness at the present moment, of an external kind, being representations of the seven-branch candlestick, the table, the vessel of incense, and the two trumpets, on the Arch of Titus at Rome. These ceremonies, these elaborate institutions, must have had a beginning at some time, and those who would discredit the Books of Moses are bound to explain when they took their rise, and how the continuous written evidence about them came to exist. Reading the Bible in this point of view, we shall find testimony of this sort constantly recurring, notices scattered in independent books written at intervals during a long period, but some within three or four hundred years from the time of Moses, all referring to his ecclesiastical and secular institutions. As we go down the list of these authors, we arrive at the poems of King David, and it may be asked, What stronger evidence can be wanted for the facts of Exodus than the enumeration of them in Psalms cv. and cvi.? If David had

not believed that narrative, he could not have written those Psalms; they constitute, therefore, the independent evidence of a wise and able author, who lived only four hundred years after the death of Moses, that is, a period a little longer than that which has elapsed since the Reformation in England. Is it to be supposed, even if books had been few, that we should not, at the present time, have had an accurate account of Henry VIII. and his proceedings, or that anyone who had access to such books and records as did exist would, in writing about him, put to paper a tissue of mistakes and absurdities? No; the evidence of the Book of Psalms is of the highest order; it is entirely external, it dates from a reasonable subsequent period, it narrates facts, ceremonies, and doctrines, and in every point it corroborates and bears out the Books of Moses. Such being the external evidence to these books, a chain without a broken link from the date of the death of Moses to the present moment, what right have we to question or discredit them? The only ground must be found in the miraculous nature of the events they record. This objection being one that can be urged against the whole Bible—more or less, in fact, against every book of the series—must be considered not to invalidate only the Books of Moses, but to overthrow with them every book of the Old and the New Testament. We may, therefore, as well for a moment consider separately the old, stale, much-vexed question, Is there such inhe-

rent *primâ facie* incredibility in miracles, that we are bound to reject, without further enquiry, any dispensation based upon and proved by them?

It is curious that in the cycle of events a question like this should recur every hundred years or so, and perhaps it is because it is a question solved rather by the *instinct* of every individual than by any especial argument, any unanswerable appeal to logic or common sense. We noticed in the introduction to the present volume the hankering men seem to have after enquiries above the range of their intellects; some preferring to deny miracles altogether, and to take up the position that their inherent incredibility is such, that even when adduced to prove a revelation, we are bound to disbelieve them; others, less logically, going half way, and while they profess to believe certain miracles, e. g. the miracles of the New Testament, deny others, e. g. the miracle of Joshua and the sun; or else, by way of reducing the quantity of the miraculous to suit the calibre of their mental digestions, reject altogether certain books of revelation, which, because they narrate the miracles of a longer and more eventful period, are more replete than others with the miraculous element. These latter objectors are not the class we are considering now, though we shall have to allude to them hereafter; their position, however, appears to be essentially untenable and absurd, and either to constitute a temporary delusion to be repented of and given up, or else a resting-place and half-way house on

the road to that infidelity which is its ultimate logical conclusion.

With respect, then, to this question of any inherent impossibility in miracles, we have shown before that no such impossibility can be predicated respecting them from the analogy of nature. Experience is no valid argument against them; for we have ourselves no *experience* of the concomitant circumstance which we claim as accompanying them, viz. the promulgation of a gradually developed dispensation for the salvation of fallen man. Our ancestors had no experience of railways or electric telegraphs, and we might, from experience, have refused credence to these very simple matter-of-fact and nowise miraculous affairs. Want of experience, then, when fairly weighed, amounts to nothing as an argument against sufficient evidence of a fact; and experience itself merely proves that an event has occurred before, and *therefore* may occur again.

Putting aside, then, the argument about want of experience of miracles, as not being conclusive, or even of any weight at all, for on that ground we ought to disbelieve every fresh discovery of science; what *primâ facie* ground have we for discrediting miracles? Clearly none. God can perform a miracle if He pleases; all that we can do, therefore, is to consider whether the purpose for which the Scripture miracles are stated to have been performed is one that seems to us reasonable and sufficient. That purpose we have shown to

have been to reveal His Person, to make known His will, to propound the moral law for the government of men, and, lastly, to proclaim the dispensation by which He, in His infinite mercy, freely gave them eternal salvation. This to Christians seems ground enough to call for and justify miracles: to infidels it does not seem so; and God leaves Christians and infidels alike the power to exercise freewill in accepting or rejecting His word. He has, however, permitted that man should not be called upon to exercise a blind faith, but that his reason should be satisfied by the greatness of the gift, by the analogy of nature, by the witness of His written word, by a powerful and conclusive chain of external and palpable evidence, and, lastly, by the gift and witness of the Holy Spirit. But at the same time He has left to every man, in the exercise of his freewill, power, if he be so disposed, to reject His Revelation and His Word. This is the only fair and simple way of putting the question: we know that God who made the laws of the universe, can, if He pleases, suspend and break them. If we are Christians, we are bound to allow that He has occasionally, in maturing and proclaiming the great mystery of Redemption, so suspended them: we possess sound and satisfactory evidence of Christianity to convince our reason; but beside and beyond that evidence, it has not pleased God to perform the further miracle of compelling man to believe.

To return from this digression; we have broadly

considered the nature of the evidence that the books of the Old Testament afford in support of each other, which we have shown to be the evidence of distinct and independent witnesses. This evidence bears most strongly upon the Books of Moses, whose laws and institutions are mentioned and alluded to in almost every book of the Old and New Testament, are to be seen, as it were, with the eye in the Forum at Rome, and are kept and reverenced by the Jewish people in every part of the world at the present moment. As we said before, the chain of evidence is complete, not a link is missing. How different in this respect from the halo of vagueness and uncertainty that surrounds even the name of Homer, contemporary as he was most probably with Jehoshaphat or Jehoram, kings that in these ancient annals, coming long after the vivid pictures of David and Solomon, seem to us to be almost recent.

The next witnesses in point of date to Holy Writ will be the books of the Apocrypha, and the writings of the ancient Hebrew divines. Besides these Jewish authorities, there are many fragments of ancient authors of the surrounding nations who refer to the period and to Judæa. Perhaps the best known event of a period anterior by three centuries to the advent of our Saviour, is the visit of Alexander the Great to Jerusalem,* when we

* The fact that Alexander was for a considerable period at Tyre, little more than 100 miles from Jerusalem, renders this

find the high priest, and other peculiarities of the temple worship, existing and in full power. The foreign evidence alluded to may be read, clearly and lucidly set forth, in Rawlinson's Bampton Lectures for 1859.

And here we cannot help observing how great has been the value, to the cause of truth and of our holy religion, of the unbiassed and unsuspected testimony of the Jewish rabbis and doctors in the past autumn to the inspiration and authenticity of the Books of Moses. It is from opponents and not from friends of Christianity, that the arms have mainly been furnished to us whereby we have been able to repel assaults on our faith, and by which inaccurate scholarship has been unmasked and reduced to its proper value. When the Bishop of Natal, forgetting the aphorism whose wisdom even he must acknowledge, 'Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off,' found fault with the Hebrew scholarship of our divines, hinting that he possessed the much-coveted qualification of sound Hebrew knowledge, he little expected or foresaw how speedily his claims would be upset or done away with, not only by Christian Hebrew scholars, but in a greater and more important degree by Jewish doctors. The existence of the Jewish people, as we see them now, is in

visit probable; otherwise, being only known to us on the authority of Josephus (a most untrustworthy witness), it would not have been quoted in this place among the historical evidences of Holy Writ.

itself the most powerful possible argument for the Scriptures and for the truth of Christianity; and it is not too much to say, that such is the perverseness of the human race, such the tendency of the human mind to doubt, so great, in fact, the power of evil, that had not the blindness we behold been suffered to continue on Israel, the faith could hardly have stood without repeated miraculous confirmation against the assaults to which it has through ages been exposed.* As it is, men have at all times been able to point to a solid tangible fact they could all see, an argument the weakest could understand and appreciate.

The existence of the Jews gives us a doubly-strengthened ground of faith; it places the Old Testament on a separate basis, as to evidential argument, from the New. While, as Christians, we *believe* the Old Testament *because* we believe the New, we *prove* the New Testament by the Old. In other words, if we were not Christians, we should, in all human probability, have been heathens, and not Jews. We do not, therefore, believe the Old Testament for its own sake, but because we have been converted to the religion of Christ. At the same time, the New Testament, both historically and prophetically, is built upon the Old. How much, then, is our faith strengthened by the

* Pascal says, in his terse way, 'Si les Juifs eussent été tous convertis par Jésus-Christ, nous n'aurions plus que des témoins suspects; et s'ils avaient été exterminés, nous n'en aurions point du tout.'—*Pensées*, 2e partie, art. 12.

fact, that the two dispensations, thus essential to each other, possess two separate palpable living witnesses, the Jewish people and the Christian Church. It is as though a great and reverend king stood before us and claimed our obedience. We allow his goodness, his talents, and his power; but we say, If you would reign over us, you must prove your royal descent. The Old Testament is the pedigree of the New, on which, and on which alone, it bases its claim to our loyalty and obedience: the pedigree itself is in the possession of hostile and rebel, though honest guardians; and we have the certainty that, though extending to the world's infancy, it has not been interpolated or tampered with. How valuable is this security — how priceless this double ground of conviction and confidence! As centuries roll on, and every year brings forward its fresh company of assailants—its Newmans, Comtes, Buckles, Williamses and Colensos—Judaism, whether viewed in reference to its historical testimony, or as a standing miracle and fulfilment of prophecy, will continue to present one of those conclusive and irrefutable arguments that may well be termed a harbour of refuge from the storms of doubt.

Having thus considered briefly the evidence borne to the several books of the Old Testament by each other, and glanced at the various other sources from which corroboratory evidence may be drawn, and having considered the invaluable testimony borne by existing Judaism to the Old Testament, we now come to the next point in our

argument, What is the evidence that the New Testament bears to the Old? What is the nature and extent of the testimony it offers in its favour?

Clearly, being the more recent in point of date, we are bound historically to look for support from it; and it is most desirable that we should form well-defined ideas as to what that support is. We are so accustomed to consider the earliest books as the foundation, the next in point of date as the first story, the following as the higher stories, until we arrive at the crown of the edifice in the last books of Scripture, that we are apt to forget that, in investigating *historical* evidence, we must reverse this order of argument. We must firmly prove the most recent books, and then work back from them to the oldest. We have been preparing, in what has gone before, for this system, showing, as we went on, how the several books were proved and supported by those that followed; how, at a later period, witnesses of profane and other testimony were added; and how, at last, we arrived at the double foundation, present Judaism and present Christianity. What, then, do these two ultimate ideas teach us? Judaism teaches us that the Old Testament books are *genuine*, and Christianity that they are *true*. It will be well for us to examine closely into these two attributes, for conscience and reason teach us that revelation must possess them both, if it be a real revelation from God.

A book may be genuine, and not be true, as in the case of works of fiction, poetry, &c., but it

cannot be true without being genuine; in this sense, that a book may be a genuine book, and yet the work of an unknown author; but it cannot profess to be the work of any definite person, and claim to be a true book in itself, and yet be, in fact, the work of some one else; for the falsehood of the claim would pervade the whole book, and make it at once not genuine and untrue. It will be seen from this that we use the word 'true' in its Old English sense of true, and not in the Anglo-German sense in which a book is called 'true' which is defined to consist of a mixture of truth with more or less falsehood, from a moderate alloy down to an amalgam of nine-tenths drivel and fable,* the latter description being considered to be true in some esoteric sense, only intelligible to the German or Anglo-German mind. In illustration of what is meant by the distinctions drawn above, we may quote the Book of Joshua, and the Second Epistle General of Peter. The former of these works nowhere asserts itself to have been written by Joshua; it may, therefore, be a true and a genuine book, and be written by somebody else living about the same time; the latter is a letter in which the name of the writer occurs in

* In a gushing poetical effusion about Baron Bunsen, in 'Essays and Reviews,' the Bible is gracefully described as

Those *fables* strange our hirelings teach.

The esoteric sense alluded to may be defined as 'the precise modicum of belief supposed to be necessary to satisfy the Dean of Arches.'

the first line; if not written by Peter, and therefore not genuine, who for a moment would consider the book to be *true*? — its author, whoever in that case he might be, by telling a falsehood at starting, would have destroyed the truthful character of his book.

Now, the testimony of Judaism to the *genuineness* of the Old Testament would seem to be complete. The books have been in their present state ever since the time of Ezra, 458 years before Christ; they were translated into Greek at Alexandria, 284 years also before the birth of our Saviour; Josephus, in his chronicle of the great catastrophe of the race, shows that the Scriptures existed, and that the law of Moses was kept, A.D. 70; it may be tendered by the Jews as the proof of this fact, and from that period to the present they can point to a continuous worship and an unbroken creed. Nothing, then, is wanting to the proof of genuineness; and the evidence that the New Testament affords us to the existence of the Old—the reverence felt for it, the ancient priesthood and worship, the Jewish character — is of little absolute value, the facts being abundantly proved by evidence derived from other sources. But what the New Testament does prove, and what it alone is capable of proving, is that the Old Testament is not only genuine, but also true and inspired.

This evidence borne by the New Testament to the truth of the Old Testament, would seem to be threefold. Firstly, the fulfilment of prophecy.

Secondly, the confirmation of doctrine. Thirdly, the expressed authority of our blessed Lord.

The fulfilment of prophecy is the first link of the chain of testimony that binds the New Testament to the Old. We have seen in a previous chapter that spiritually and really the division of New and Old Testament ought not to occur where we place it, but that the Gospels ought by rights to be placed as the final and culminating books of the dispensation of redemption, which began at the fall of the first Adam, and ended with the death and resurrection of the 'Second Adam.' Historically, the division is necessary, as history deals with dates, and times, and seasons, not with those higher questions to which we have elsewhere alluded, and which in the next chapter will more fully engage our attention. A moment's consideration, however, of the true view will show how vital is the blow aimed at Christianity by modern German sceptics, and their admirers and translators, when they endeavour to sever the connection between the prophetic foreshadowings of Christ and the realities of His life and death. Let us be thankful that such endeavours are simply futile and powerless to persuade any unbiassed and impartial thinker. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the twenty-second Psalm, the promise made at the fall, the knowledge of old Job, the covenant to Abraham, all the varied predictions in those Scriptures concerning Himself which our Lord condescended to explain to His two disciples, lite-

rally and exactly fulfilled in His life, death, and resurrection, these constitute the first great argument from the New Testament that the Old Testament is true.

The confirmation of doctrine is the next testimony. This extends to the teachings of the ceremonial, as well as the moral law. Its most striking instances may be, perhaps, the submission of Christ to the rite of circumcision for the first, and the sermon on the mount *passim* for the second. Careful reading will show many such confirmations; obedience to ceremonial, 'fulfilling all righteousness;' * confirmation of doctrine, 'Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.'† To those who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, absolutely true, this confirmation will prove the truth of the Old Testament. For would He have confirmed by His teaching, and obeyed in His person, that which was erroneous or false? Clearly not. To assert the contrary, would be to place the Saviour in a lower category than the simplest martyr who died rather than eat the food offered to idols or be present at a sacrificial feast! We commend this last consideration to those writers of the neological school who, though they would hardly dare confess the thought to themselves, yet in their secret hearts cherish an idea that our Saviour in some way compromised with truth, when He so unequivocally supported the Old Tes-

* Matthew iii. 15. † Mark xii. 29.

tament. Do they wish to place our Saviour below the simplest Lollard or Waldensian? The confession that flour and water was, or even might be, human flesh, would have saved these men's lives; but they scorned to dally with truth, and suffered in the flames.

The last head under which we have classified the evidence the New Testament bears to the truth of the Old, is the testimony that is borne to it by our blessed Lord Himself. The passages in which our Lord thus testifies frequently occur in every part of the Gospels, and are far too numerous to allow either of reference or quotation; we will therefore merely mention two remarks as specimens of *historical* evidence. In Matthew xxii. 31, 32, our blessed Lord says: 'Have ye not *read* that which was spoken *unto you by God*, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' The passage of the Old Testament to which reference is made occurs in one of the five Books of Moses (Exodus iii. 6). Let us now observe how our Saviour alludes to it. He says, 'Have ye not read' (that is to say, have you not read in the Book of Exodus?) 'that which was spoken unto *you* by God' (that is to say, those words which were spoken by God to Moses were indeed spoken unto you, because they are in his book), 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?'—that is to say, God is the God of three patriarchs of old, whose history you know through

the Book of Genesis, and about whom you would not know one word if the Book of Genesis did not exist. What can be stronger proof that our Saviour Himself believed the books of the Old Testament? and can their authority be more solemnly enforced than by the assertion that God's words spoken to Moses, and recorded by him, are *ipso facto* the words of God *spoken to ourselves*?

Again, in Luke xvi. 29, the patriarch Abraham is introduced. In answer to the prayer of Dives, he says, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them:' just as a minister of the Gospel in the present day might say, 'Refer to your Bible;' for the answer presupposes the possession of the Old Testament, 'They have it,' and can refer to and believe it if they like, just as we have it now with the fuller and clearer light of the New Testament added to it. The next answer given to the repeated entreaty of Dives is suggestive of much humble thought and prayer; 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' If the blindness that would not see the torch of the Old Testament was so incurable, how far more hopeless must that be which remains insensible while gazing on the meridian Sun of Truth!

Our argument has now brought us to the question which is, in fact, the foundation of our belief in the Old Testament, How far is the New Testament, how far is Christianity, supported by historical evidence? As we pointed out just now, we should be compelled

by sound historical evidence to admit the genuineness of the Old Testament, even if we were unbelievers in its truth: it stands alone in that respect; and the Jews of the present day, honestly and accurately tracing back their Scriptures in their collected form as we have them to Ezra, B.C. 458, and, beyond that, by sound historical induction to their several writers, can fairly claim to possess a sequence of genuine historical sacred books. But our faith is distinct from, though to a certain extent identical with, theirs. We build on Jesus Christ, and on Him alone. When the Apostles and the early missionaries of Christianity planted that germ which has since expanded into a mighty tree, they did not begin by educating their Gentile converts in the doctrines and history of Judaism; they preached 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified,' and it was only after their converts had become Christians, after they had believed the Gospel for the Gospel's sake, credited its miracles, learned its doctrines and its precepts, that they went on to be more fully instructed in Holy Scripture, and had explained to them the *whole* of that mystery of Redemption of which at first they only apprehended the life-giving climax. It is by the preaching of the Cross that men's hearts are moved and the lamp of faith lighted; it is by study of the Word that the sacred fire is kept alive.

When we reflect that such is the basis of our faith, that everything we believe and hope for here and hereafter depends upon the truth of the history

of the life and death of Jesus Christ, we ought to be deeply thankful to God that our Redeemer did not appear at remote times, in a distant district of the world, at a period when language was in its infancy, and when literature was scarce. Had it been so, our puny little faith would have indeed been sorely tried. But no such trial was in store for the human race; everything had been so prepared for the advent of the Redeemer that through ages following to the end of the world men would lack a single real excuse, though Satan will always furnish ostensible excuses in plenty, for unbelief. We will shortly consider these two important points, —the *when* and the *where* of the advent of Christ.

And, first of all, the *when.*

From an early period after the Flood, mankind, divided into numerous nations and races, had commenced a series of wars and strifes that seem to have been sanguinary and almost incessant. That such a state of things was inevitable we can well believe, seeing as we do the bloodshed even of these civilised and Christian times; and those who reflect upon the rapid increase, by geometrical progression, of undisturbed humanity, can also well believe that the three great scourges that God allowed to desolate mankind — the sword, the famine, and the pestilence (in what goodly company do the Alarics and Napoleons of the world appear in Holy Writ!) — were necessary to the carrying out of the future destinies of the human race. At last, however, these mutual destructions came to

an end; and after the battle of Actium, B.C. 30, a period of almost absolute repose for mankind ensued, which, reaching its climax in the year of our Saviour's birth — a year that witnessed the closing of the Temple of Janus — continued through His life, and may be considered to have lasted until the Jewish war, about thirty-six years after our Saviour's death. During this interval of ninety years of repose there was, indeed, war in Britain, in Germany, and Central Africa, but these wars, comparatively remote from the centres of population and civilisation, were hardly noticed in the general quiet. The whole reign of Augustus, and the reigns of his immediate successors, are pervaded with the idea of peace and quietness. Rome had ceased to aim at conquest, and she was too strong for other nations to venture to cope with her. Soon after the close of this period, wars and troubles recommenced and intensified, until it seemed not unlikely that the world would relapse into barbarism; but in the meanwhile the leaven of Christianity had pervaded the whole lump, and henceforth the race will move in its upward path, guided by the lamp of truth, and wars, famines, and pestilences, invasions and revolutions, will be equally powerless to stop its march, or even to deflect it to the right hand or to the left.

It was in this halcyon epoch, in this period of quiet so abnormal that the world had never known its like, that Jesus Christ was born, lived, and died. We know all about the period thoroughly. Tacitus

and Suetonius narrate to us its history, Horace and Juvenal reveal its inner life, and a galaxy of writers, both of prose and poetry, tell of its literary culture; indeed so eminent was, in this respect, its earlier portion, that we have agreed to term a period of remarkable literary development an 'Augustan age.' Among the books of this peaceful period are the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles of the New Testament, and somewhat later the Revelation of St. John; books not imperfect, like Tacitus and other classical works, but, from the extreme value that was attached to them from the first, and from the anxious care with which every copy was guarded, in an absolutely perfect and uninjured state of preservation. The language in which these books were written was itself as providential as the calm and quiet of the period in which they appeared. For many years a language, the most lucid, expressive, and powerful that the world has yet seen, had been fixing for the human race until the end of time, κτῆμα εἰς ἀεί, the noblest thoughts and the choicest poetry, the profoundest utterings of philosophy and the most melodious gems of song. This language, carried by a great conqueror, had, B.C. 332, overflowed and overspread Asia and Egypt; and when Greece, in her turn, succumbed to the Roman army, the fierce conqueror himself fell under the spell of that syren language and that unrivalled literature, '*Grecia capta ferum victorem cepit.*' Thus it came to pass that the Greek language had become the means of conveying the

thoughts of educated men throughout the civilised world. Latin itself was overcome by it, and every educated man, every scholar, every gentleman in Europe, Asia, and Africa could read and talk Greek. It was in this language, and not in the triangles or pictures of an earlier period, that the latter revelation of God to man was destined to be conveyed. How different would have been its diffusion had any other means been employed — had it even been made known by books in the Hebrew tongue! And yet we can see that the very possession of this language, and the literature that was wedded to it, was enough to render the Greek people unfit to be themselves the medium of communicating these truths to the world. Their very intellectual development unsuited them for such an honour. It was not to a nation of philosophers, orators, and sophists that the truths of the Gospel could first be made known. It was to an incult and vindictive, but earnest and hearty people, that this privilege was reserved—a people with little or no literature, but possessing, what was better than any literature, a knowledge of the one true God, and a hatred of idolatry and image-worship branded as it were upon their souls by the red-hot iron of God's punishments. Such a people might hate and persecute the new revelation, but they could not despise or ridicule it; it might be to them a stumblingblock, but it could not be foolishness. We can see, then, clearly how the Greek people and the Greek language were instruments in

God's hand to prepare the world for the advent of Christ, and how these choice instruments, that had been preparing for eight centuries, had fulfilled their mission and reached their full degree of usefulness when the advent took place. Roman rule and Roman law, Greek genius and Greek letters, these are the great distinguishing types of the epoch when the Saviour came. The first gave peace and silence for the utterance of the good news, law and order for its promulgation; the last gave a universal language, to convey it from land to land, the only language worked out by fallible man fit to be employed upon such a mission.

Let us next consider the situation and physical nature of that country, prepared and predestined from the time of Abraham to be the scene of this great event. For the early history of God's peculiar people it was necessary that it should be isolated; for the spread of Christianity it was necessary that it should be in the way, open and exposed to the busy world; and we find it, in fact, fulfilling both these apparently contradictory conditions. In early times the great idolatrous powers surrounded it on the north, east, and south; and from these it was separated by natural boundaries, by Lebanon, by the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea, and by the Southern Desert. The small, long, narrow strip of land, with its plain country in the north and its hill country in the south, seems to be quite shut out from contact with its neighbours; and we can see its peculiar suitability and aptitude for the people who were to

be alone in the world, and not reckoned among the nations. But as time passed on, civilisation moved from east to west, until in the beginning of our era it centred in Italy; the sea also ceased to be the barrier, and became the highway of nations; the Mediterranean, especially, became the space about which clustered the civilised countries and cities of the world, while during the summer months ships in multitudes crossed and recrossed its tranquil and tideless waters. Then Palestine found itself at once in the middle of thought and life; its isolation, no longer useful or desirable, had come to an end; the desert, the valley, and the mountain, instead of keeping out a premature and unhealthy civilisation, now kept out the vile decrepit barbarism of the East, while its Mediterranean shore opened to it constant, easy, and direct communication with Italy and Greece. Such was the portion of land which God selected as the hallowed spot on which was to be carried out the great mystery of the redemption of man; the only portion of the earth's surface which from the foundation of the world had never been wholly* given up to idolatry,

* We have a right to assume this; for when the Israelites arrived out of Egypt, they found in Balaam one worshipper at all events of Jehovah. We may therefore assume that he had learned his creed in the usual way from others that preceded him, that the worship of God was not at any time before the Exodus extinct in the land. We know that subsequently, during the longest and deepest relapses of the Jewish people into idolatry, there was always a remnant left who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

never wholly divorced from the worship of the true God. We can well believe that a country not so hallowed would not have been fitted for so sacred and solemn a purpose.

It was in an epoch of the world thus prepared for His reception, in a country so suited by nature to disperse abroad His message, that our Saviour came on earth. His missionary work lasted but three short years, but it was *with power* both of word and deed; and while His wisdom was such that men hardly dared ask Him any questions, it was to His power, His wonderful works, that He Himself appealed in proof to the multitude of His Divine mission, and in proof to His disciples of His own Divinity.

We thus arrive at the conclusion that, even historically, the dispensation under which we live, and which is only known to us through the Bible, is essentially and fundamentally supernatural and miraculous. It was the mighty works shown forth by Jesus Christ that worked conviction in the minds of His Apostles,—which, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, so wrought upon *their hearers*, that in the first generation of converts this divine persuasion, this 'evidence of things not seen' by them, but seen by their instructors, was powerful enough to give them nerve and courage to face the wild beast of the arena, and the burning stake by the roadside. It was comparatively easy for a subsequent generation of sufferers under Diocletian to go through the awful trial, because they had the example of their predecessors who suffered under Nero before

their eyes, and they could argue that men who had faced death under circumstances of such exquisite torture, possessed a treasure of truth worth dying for. These martyrs of the Neronian persecution, A.D. 60, were the true seed of the Church; leaders, indeed, who have had many followers, but leaders, and to be acknowledged leaders, for all that. We may well believe that it was a comparatively small trial for an Apostle, who had himself heard the gracious words and seen the mighty deeds, to assume the palm of martyrdom. But how full of conviction must have been the teaching of these men! — how absolute their persuasion of the truth of the doctrines they taught and the miracles they related, that their pupils and converts should have been prepared in *great numbers* to face so appalling a fate! It is to these men that the Gospels we now possess were handed over fresh from the pens of the evangelists, and it was to them that the Epistle to the Romans was addressed, and by them preserved. The rest of our sacred books of the New Testament, that depository of life-giving inspired truth, were entrusted to others, who in different cities had formed themselves into Christian churches or societies, and who, like their Roman brethren, stood manfully against persecution and outrage.

As to the external evidence of the genuineness of the Sacred Books of Christianity, it is about complete. There perhaps exists no book, ancient or modern, that can claim such abundant proof of

its origin and its preservation as the New Testament. Written, as has been shown, in a period that almost seems modern, a period in comparison with which 700 years *later* appears to be remote antiquity, so much less do we know about it, carefully kept by men who valued them above any possession in life, even above life itself, they have ever since been the subject of uninterrupted study and comment on the part of the fathers of the Church and of divines of all ages.

We may fairly draw the same line here that we drew with respect to the Old Testament; the genuineness and authenticity of these books are facts beyond doubt or cavil; their truth everybody is at liberty to receive or reject as pleases him best. As in the Old Testament, there are difficulties which only yield to a faithful humble perusal, but which stand erect and bar the road by which the pride of intellect would fain force its way to truth. Had they been written in any but the Greek language there is no question but that their thousand, we may almost say myriad, commentators and annotators would have greatly confused and bewildered the meaning of the text; but that language admitted of no clouding, for every word as it stood alone bore within itself the record of its signification. The narrative of this early period, and of the transmission of the sacred books, has been most clearly and pleasantly written by M. de Pressensé in his 'Trois premiers Siècles de l'Eglise Chrétienne:' we may not agree in all his religious views, whether of

doctrine or discipline, but as a concise and yet readable historical narrative the book is greatly to be commended. On the subject of the sacred text, 'Théopneustie,' by M. Gaussen, of Geneva, is a most valuable and complete summary of argument.

It is hardly necessary to observe that Tacitus and Pliny among historians, and Juvenal among satirists, writing at the time of the early persecutions, allude to Christianity. We might feel sure that such would be the case, but there is something humiliating in the sort of triumphant tone in which this evidence, natural and inevitable in such authors, is quoted by the writers on Christian evidences of the last century.

And this brings us to the consideration of three authors, Paley, Lardner, and Bishop Watson; the research, acuteness, and truth of their books are admirable and worthy of all praise, but the same cannot be said for the tone in which they are written. There is an inherent weakness in Paley and these other works on evidences which even great talent and a righteous cause cannot overcome. The reason is very simple; it arises from the form given to the argument. Instead of treating the writers of the sacred books as we should Thucidides or Xenophon, or even such questionable authors as Juvenal or Suetonius, not imputing to them all sorts of imaginary accusations, but criticising and discussing their books in a respectful ordinary way, these writers on evidences have invented all sorts of felonious

charges against their authors,—charges which never entered into the mind of any sane man, or rather of any man whose moral sense was not entirely warped by rabid atheism. They then set to work to disprove these charges by 'proving a negative.' This operation is always difficult and slippery, and hardly ever conclusive, and the kind of admission it involves that guilt may be and has been presumed makes it eminently unsatisfactory. Yet one book especially of this kind, Paley's 'Evidences,' is probably the first book on religious subjects that a young man has to 'get up,' and therefore troubles himself to read attentively. The result is an impression which in after life he can never shake off, —that such charges have been made against the Apostles. He cannot get himself to think that if they had never been seriously made, so much pains would be taken to disprove them. We can all appreciate the effect on a jury of that sort of evidence to character which consists in a number of witnesses coming forward and saying, 'I never knew anything against the prisoner.' Yet that is the kind of testimony which the chain of Christian evidence is made to bear to the really unimpugned and unattacked character of the Apostles. Mr. Birks warmly defends these books upon the ground of past usefulness in the controversy with French atheism: no doubt it was so, though far more attention than it deserved was bestowed upon that temporary moral madness of a nation; but whether these books were useful or not for such a purpose is

no proof that they are not *now* most pernicious and unwholesome intellectual food, especially for the young. That they are so, the hateful presumption of falsehood that adheres in after-life to what would not, but for such reading, have for an instant been suspected, must be the proof. The term 'Old Bailey literature' has been applied to them, and whatever their talent, whatever their research, the term is justly deserved. A book of Christian evidences, written in a becoming spirit, is yet a book of the future.

The above remarks are not intended to imply that where doubts upon sacred subjects have unfortunately been formed in the mind, these books may not be studied with great advantage. They are, indeed, the medicine suited for such a diseased intellectual state; but we are not to conclude, because a gouty patient may be benefited by colchicum, that therefore colchicum is salutary for everybody, including healthy lads of eighteen.

Blunt's 'Undesigned Coincidences,' which we may designate the 'Horæ Paulinæ' of the Old Testament, is a very curious and ingenious book, and will interest and amuse the reader; but it is impossible to imagine that anyone who had rejected the grand arguments of Christianity, and had withdrawn his credit from Scripture, would be convinced by this puzzle-like adaptation of scattered particles into fragments of truth.

In conclusion, then, we should remember that the New Testament has come down to us sup-

ported by stronger evidence of genuineness than Tacitus, Pliny, or any classical author whose authority and truth no one for an instant ever thought of questioning; that from the moment of its being written, it has been preserved with the most anxious care, and every word noted and scrutinised by friend and foe; that the Old Testament stands upon a double basis, its truth being proved by the New Testament, and its genuineness by the combined evidence of the New Testament, of the several books to each other, and, lastly, of the Jewish Church and nation. Strong, then, as is the witness borne to itself by Holy Writ, not one whit less strong is the historical evidence we possess of its truth, its authenticity, and its inspiration of God.

CHAPTER V.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

The Testimony double, internal and external — Love the Key-note of the Bible — Faith the Key to Prophecy — Witness of the Spirit to the Creative Epoch — Witness of the Spirit to the Redemptive Epoch — Bible Difficulties solved by God's Love — Slight Mention of a Future State in the Old Testament considered — Slavery and Polygamy among the Jews — Double Calling of Moses — The Witness of the Spirit to God's Love — to His Justice — to His Providence — Modern Views of Providence and Law — Witness of the Spirit to God's Truth — to the Third or Spiritual Epoch — Witness of the Spirit by Manifestation of Himself to the Soul of Man — His Witness in Prophecy — Civilisation a Witness of the Spirit.

TO the believer in the inspiration of Scripture, there is another witness, far greater and more convincing than any external historical evidence, however strong, and that is the witness of the Holy Spirit, Himself the Author and Inspirer of the Book. We shall find this evidence by a careful consideration of the Book itself, and of the effect it has produced, and is producing, on the souls of men, and on the course of events in the visible Church, and in the world at large. The first and principal part of our enquiry will be *internal* evidence, the mark and seal of God's Spirit impressed

on every portion of the Holy Book ; the second part will be merely to consider the palpable visible result of the action of the Spirit of God, whose ever-living and ever-present utterance we have found the Bible to be ; this will evidently be evidence of an *external* character.

We will first, then, consider what we have called in a previous chapter the monotony of the Bible, the single tone of inspired truth that pervades every part of Holy Writ. And here again, for the sake of clearness, we may adopt a subdivision, we may listen for the voice of God speaking to our *souls* in pure moral truths, in precepts, in motives to love and obey Him, and, lastly, in the revelation of the scheme of salvation, which forms the key-note of the Book ; and we may hear Him speaking to our *intellects* in the chain of prophecies that foreshadow the advent of Christ, and in the varied incidents of His life, death, and resurrection. In the former, the appeal is to our conscience and our affections ; in the latter, to our reason and our faith.

It perhaps has never occurred to anyone who has taken up a book in a foreign language of which he is ignorant, to attempt to read it without grammar, dictionary, or any clue to its meaning, yet such is the conduct of those who undertake to criticise and explain Scripture, without possessing these two dictionaries to its language and meaning, love and faith. We before noticed how clear and simple God's dealings with man become, if we look at them in the single light of His infinite love, if

we remember that man is a free agent, that God has determined to save the whole human race by the dispensation of salvation through Christ; that while this salvation is gradually working out, the chosen nation and every individual man, woman, and child in it were, and were to continue, free agents; and that when the great atonement for sin was completed on the cross, man was still to be at liberty to accept or reject salvation as he thought best. What infinite love does this show, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us! And yet we read hard dry criticisms, in which minute details are cavilled at, the writer forgetting that such is the chain by which incidents are bound together, that, as Pascal somewhere says of the death of Oliver Cromwell, a grain of sand being in the wrong place saved the papacy, and altered the destiny of Europe. How can we tell that, had any one of these incidents or dispensations been reversed, the Jewish nation might not have drifted away from the truth, and thereby the scheme of salvation have failed? These reflections have been thrown out before, but they are necessarily repeated here, by way of protest against anyone attempting or presuming to explain Scripture by any other light than that of the overwhelming paramount love of God. This love is the key to every word in the Book. If we lose sight of it, we are as incompetent to understand one thought or passage of Scripture, as a national school child would be to read the Latin Vulgate or the Greek Septuagint.

So, again, to understand prophecy we must have faith. Read in a spirit of unbelief and distrust, prophecy will not convince us. Though clear enough to satisfy the apostles and disciples, prophecy was not of that palpable, self-evident, matter-of-fact description that would have made unbelief impossible, and have prevented the Jews from immolating their Lord. Yet we must remember that in their case (the chief criminals where all are criminal, the chief sufferers where all suffer), prophecy was strengthened by the evidence of His wonderful works wrought by Himself throughout the length and breadth of the land. It is not, therefore, for the Jews to complain, in the face of this supernatural development of infinite love and infinite power exhibited *to them alone of nations*, and affording to everyone who looked at the marvellous works and read the prophets that spoke of Him a means and opportunity of believing, of coming out of the unbelieving race, and of escaping a share in that crime whose punishment is still enduring. *Faith* is revealed to us as *essential* to enable a man to be saved, and to dwell with God. Had prophecy been detailed, matter-of-fact, and clear, where had been the room for *faith*? — and perhaps, after pondering on the preceding remarks, we may be allowed to add, where would have been the room for salvation?

Having premised thus much, we must next divest ourselves of the arbitrary division of Old and New Testament, and adopt the only true and real two-

fold division to which we alluded in a previous chapter. We will, then, investigate the witness of the Holy Spirit. First, to the Creative Epoch; secondly, to the Redemptive Epoch; and thirdly, to the Spiritual Epoch. We will, as before mentioned, consider this witness as shown *morally* in the ethics of the Bible, in its evidence of the goodness, mercy, and love of God, in its consentaneity and analogy to the conscience of man; we will also consider the witness as shown *intellectually* in the Divine sanction of prophecy, and in the reasonableness of God's revealed dealings with man. This will complete the internal evidence of the Spirit of God to the truth of revelation.

What, then, is the Witness of the Spirit to the Creative Epoch of the Bible? We find there every living creature created expressly for its own especial element and sphere of existence. 'Let the waters bring forth the living creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.' This, which our knowledge has shown us to be strictly true, we have plainly set before us by the Spirit of God. But the Spirit reveals to us still further, that from time to time God blessed the work of His hands, that God said, 'Be fruitful and multiply,' and we see that blessing clearly in the happiness of created beings; while who can look at the thousand seeds in the pods of three or four flowers, the nine million eggs in a salmon's roe, without seeing therein the literal fulfilment of a revealed blessing from God? So, again, the Spirit

reveals to us that God said, 'Let us make man in our own image,' and our intellect and our conscience tell us that what the Spirit has here revealed is literally true. The yearning of the mind of man for immortality; that seal of goodness and moral beauty so clearly and hardly stamped upon his inner being that even the thickest coat of sin cannot quite obliterate or conceal it; these tell him in accents loud as the Archangel's trumpet that he is the image, soiled and broken and marred, but still the image, of his eternal, all-wise, and all-good Creator. Such is the witness of the Spirit to the Creative Epoch. The Holy Spirit, through the pen of Moses, has revealed to us that epoch as one of love and of blessing; as the bestowal of life on innumerable creatures, to be spent by them in happiness and absolute contentment; as the period of that original gift of the power of reproduction that has caused each successive year to constitute, as it were, a fresh creation (every animal, every insect, every vegetable existence each contributing its annual progeny), and lastly, as the period when God placed upon earth a creature made in His own image, destined to rule over all His wondrous scheme. The revelation is very short; it is but a few lines, but its absolute and unerring truth, both physical and moral, will become more evident and more palpable on every fresh perusal.

To ascertain the witness of the Spirit to the next or Redemptive Epoch, we must read it as a whole; not from the first chapter of Genesis to the

last chapter of Malachi, but from the second chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of St. John's Gospel inclusive. We must remember that it is all one history, the Redeemer showing Himself on earth to men from time to time during the earlier portion, and living among men on earth during the latter. We must remember that the same Divine Being who spoke to Moses amidst the awe and terror of Sinai, explained and illustrated the message there given in the humble garb of a mechanic on a hill in Galilee; that He who in earlier times wrought signs and wonders by the hand of Moses and of his servants, in the latter period came on earth and performed the same wonderful works Himself. Looking thus at this portion of Scripture from the only true point of view, we shall have constantly in sight the crown of the edifice, that sacrifice on Calvary which is the result to which every word of Scripture points, and which every act, every command, every ceremony, every event has its share in bringing about. If we remember this, we shall no longer cavil about types, for we shall see at a glance that types there must be and in abundance, for they are part of the witness of the Spirit; so, again, instead of carping at prophecy, we shall strive to find more hidden meanings of the same kind; and so, lastly, instead of allowing our mind to be led away and our judgement warped by difficulties, we shall look to Calvary, we shall read the last words of the inspired account, the Gospel of St. John, and seek to find the solution of them there. And we shall

not be disappointed; there is not a moral difficulty in the Old Testament that does not disappear when looked at under the searching light of that unutterable and inappreciable evidence of God's love.

As an example of the manner in which true thoughts of revelation and belief in the inspiration and consistency of God's Word tend to clear our mental vision, and to explain what often seem to be difficulties, we shall select two of the most prominent points to which exception is frequently taken by unbelievers,—the very slight allusion, in the earlier portion of the Redemptive Epoch, to a future state of rewards and punishments, and the toleration in the Jewish social economy and jurisprudence of two acknowledged evils, slavery and polygamy.

The Jewish nation, during the period alluded to, was God's Church on earth. It was the Church of God at a time when He was engaged in redeeming, but had not completed the redemption of man. If we reflect upon this truth, we shall see that the inspired Word would, in harmony and consistency with God's providence, be silent about a future state of happiness that had not then been purchased for man, about a heaven that man had forfeited and to which he was only restored by the blood shed on Calvary. It is true that our Saviour is justly and rightly termed the 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' for the merit of His sacrifice includes all that went before as well as all that followed, but it is as true that, eighteen hundred

and thirty years ago, God in human form died on the cross on a hill in Judæa, and that, until the hour He so died, there was no heaven earned for men. In the old dispensation, the price had not been paid, and the reward it purchased could not be forestalled. If we contemplate humbly and reverentially this idea, how simple does the scheme of the covenant, and of the revealed religion of those early days, appear to us. Heaven had not been earned for us, and could not be preached to us, and therefore hell, *which is exclusion from heaven*, was also necessarily kept veiled. At the same time, foreshadowings of the glory to be revealed hereafter *are here and there vouchsafed* to some few among those who, through faith and patience, would hereafter inherit the promises. What was required was faith in God, the God of their fathers, their own peculiar and especial God. Thus the feeling of patriotism and the feeling of family, the two most powerful motives and instincts that mould the character and guide the actions of mankind, were called in to help them in their perilous struggle against idolatry and Satan. By the premature (for its omission from God's Word justifies us in using the term) revelation of the *all-embracing breadth* of the religion of Jehovah, this great power would have been lost; and we can easily see that a revelation of a future state of rewards and punishments, open to the Jew only, was impossible, because, if *distinctly* revealed, the *whole truth* must have been made manifest, and

how then could the Jews have been any longer God's peculiar people? Considerations such as these will show us that the reticence above alluded to was inevitable in a local personal religion, such as that under which the Jewish people were kept isolated and apart, in order that the salvation of the whole human race might be brought about in a manner preordained and predetermined by God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are, however, quite beside the purpose of explaining the why and the wherefore of the omission. The first ground of argument is the one true answer to the question, Why such revelation was not clearly and fully made to the Jews, and if to them, to the whole human race? It was not, as we can see, because the human race was not educated enough to take in a full spiritual revelation — the presence of the future state in all the false religions sufficiently disproves this assumption — but because God's revelation to man being essentially Personal, is truly subject to times and seasons, and that Christ not having suffered, heaven had not been earned, and the price of man's first transgression and the accumulated transgressions of the race had not been paid. The cloudy and vague perceptions of the patriarchs and prophets about a heaven, to which, when they lived and wrote, they were not entitled, is no argument against inspiration; it is, on the contrary, an argument in its favour. It is not a difficulty; it is part of the witness of the Holy Spirit to the truth of the Word of God.

It has been the custom of writers on these subjects to idealise, to be wise beyond what is written, and to such an extent has this been carried, that possibly the thoughts just expressed may shock some persons and surprise others. But in truth the sacrifice on Calvary means this or nothing. If man had been saved already, that sacrifice was unnecessary, and therefore every Christian is bound to believe that his salvation was earned and paid for on the Friday before the great Sabbath of the Passover of the year A.D. 32. The faith of the old patriarchs would not have been a saving faith but for the death of the Son of God which took place on that day. If the hazy and misty idealism by which this simple patent fact is sought to be explained away in the present day had any foundation in truth, then indeed we might look for a full revelation of heaven in the Old Testament; but it is not so, and its absence confirms the true view of the Gospel history. In conclusion, we may observe that when our Lord and the Baptist preached the kingdom of heaven, these revelations were confined exclusively to the people of Judæa and Galilee; it was not until heaven *by right* belonged to men that the full and clear intelligence of their glorious *inheritance* was heralded forth to the whole race.

One more point is worthy of remark upon this subject; the Pharisees, by the close and detailed study of Scripture, by their examination of the letter of the law, their 'tithing of mint, anise, and cummin,' had arrived at and embraced a correct perception of

the truth as to a future state, and as to angels and spirits, which had escaped the broad views of the more philosophical and highly educated Sadducees. There were hints enough to guide them right, besides the removal of Enoch and Elijah to the resting-place of the blessed; but these hints were lessons of truth to only a limited part of the Church, and that the portion corresponding, in their reverence for the letter of the law and the testimony (and possibly in some degree by their faults), to the Puritans of modern times, while they utterly failed to convince the broad Church of those days, and excited the contempt of the philosophical Sadducee.

We will now consider the second of these difficulties, one portion of which, slavery, so greatly scandalised the Bishop of Natal, as to be one of the causes that induced him to give up his belief in the earlier books of the Redemptive Epoch of Scripture, rather than allow it to be possible that God could have tolerated the institution in the social economy of the Jews. We shall find the solution of the difficulty in the fact, that while God in His infinite love was working out the redemption of man by means that required the existence and nationality of the Jews to be preserved, He at the same time allowed and respected the freewill of each individual Jew, man, woman, and child: we ought, indeed, to make use of the key we mentioned a few pages back, the knowledge we possess of God's infinite love, and our own experience that man is a free agent; and that, therefore, events are

to be explained by the *conjoint action* of these two great causes.

How, then, is slavery recognised in the Bible? It is authorised and mentioned without either praise or blame as an institution, and rules for its organisation and mitigation are laid down. The absolute disposal of the slave by the master, the cruelty and unbridled oppression of the heathen system of slavery, must not be tolerated among God's chosen people; in fact, for the native Jew the position was to be only temporary, and in any case the year of Jubilee found him free; yet there is no question that, though not commanded, slavery was allowed. It was *only allowed*, however; for the last books of the Redemptive Epoch, which must be read with the others, tell us that the Divine rule of conduct is, 'to do to others as *we would* they should do to us;' and the paraphrase *involuntary* servitude, adopted to soften the idea of slavery, better perhaps expresses than the odious term itself how incompatible is the system with Gospel morality. All, then, that the existence of the system in the early books of revelation teaches us is this,—that the social economy of the Jewish people was such that a system inherently bad had to be tolerated among them, as their nationality and commonwealth could not be kept up without it, and that nationality *must* be kept up for the ulterior purposes of the love of God. Even now, looking at the social state of the East (allowed by God to remain unchanged, that we may the better understand His Word), we

can see that a command abolishing slavery (and God's commands *must* be obeyed, and not remain a dead letter) would have broken up the nation, and its disintegrated particles would have gravitated to the idolatrous nations around them. Even more than in the feudal times, the chiefs were the representatives of the whole people, whom all obeyed and to whom all succumbed. Were these heads of families to do their menial work themselves, or only with the help of their wives? The feudal or patriarchal state of society involves the idea of slavery or serfdom. It would have been as much an anachronism in the early period of the world's history to dispense with slaves, as it would now be in England to possess them. The profuse hospitality required from a feudal chieftain by public opinion could not be carried out by paid labour, no fortune or wealth would suffice for it. It might have pleased God to order that the Jews alone in the world should anticipate the modern state of society and live in a condition of social equality; but it must be a subject for grave question how far an artificial premature civilisation of the kind was *possible*; and as we see it was not enforced, for only under the heaviest penalties could a state of things so different from the rest of the world and so repugnant to their feelings have been carried out, we are justified in concluding that it would not have been possible. And we may derive some light in this matter from a consideration of the tremendous and inexorable penalties by which even so simple a

matter as the observance of the Sabbath was rendered compulsory. If to secure obedience it was necessary to punish Sabbath-breaking with death, slaveholding, had it been forbidden, could only have been suppressed by an equally stringent penalty. How far regulations of this kind could have been carried out in a decentralised social system, where, much as in this country, the law, the peace, the local government, all hinged upon the feudal heads of families, it is not easy to imagine.

M. Dupont-White, a witness whose devotion to the cause of human freedom none can impugn, in a recent essay thus alludes to the universality of slavery in the early stages of the world's history:—'Existence itself was so difficult a matter in these early times, that the vast majority of mankind willingly bartered their freedom for lodging, food, and clothing. The loveable ingenuousness of the infant world, "*l'aimable simplicité du monde naissant*," as Fénelon calls it, exhibits everywhere, without exception, man enslaved to man. Moses permitting and supporting the institution among the Jews is a notable instance of the truth of this remark. But we must not suppose that the slave was only the captive whose life was spared. Slavery was far too universal to admit of any explanation of this kind. It was, no doubt, a perversion of right; for we cannot agree with Aristotle that certain men have an innate mastery over their fellow-men, analogous to the superiority which the soul exercises over the body; but though in itself a perversion of right, it was one of those

perversions most frequently found in nature, or, rather, in the social condition of the human race; and man for many a century knew no other alternative than slavery or death.

Remembering, then, how greatly the fate of the slave in Judæa was above that of the slaves even of Greece or Rome, slaughtered in troops to amuse the caprice of a cruel or vindictive master, we may further examine how God overruled evil, in this case, to produce good. The foreign circumcised slave was the Gentile element of that early Church; it was through him, and through the stranger proselyte, that the Jewish people learned that men not sprung from the loins of Abraham might belong to the Church, that God 'of these stones might raise up children to Abraham,' for He was not bound by race or blood.

The further question of polygamy admits of precisely the same explanation; only, as we know, in such cases the heart comes in, and therefore we may conclude, that while slavery and polygamy were allowed as a necessary part of a defective social system, the latter was also permitted, as we know was divorce, 'because of the hardness of their hearts.'

But men must not argue as if such toleration was to be interpreted as in any degree a sanction for all time. There is no Jewish nation *now* to be preserved through difficulties and temptations. We *now* all know what is right, and woe to us if we willingly and knowingly disobey!

In looking back upon these past reflections we shall see that Moses had a double calling. He was the temporary head of the visible Church on earth, uttering inspired truths, facts, and commandments, to enlighten, to instruct, and to rule the faithful for all time; and he was the lawgiver of the Israelites, uttering inspired laws and ordinances for the social government of the people in their onward march to accomplish the great destiny of their nation. The one set of utterances *is just as inspired* as the other. God, in the one case, inspired him to utter truths of eternal moment to the salvation of man; in the other case, He inspired him to utter ordinances *essential and necessary* for the preservation of the Jewish nation, and for the carrying out of His work of love.

This love of God may, indeed, well be termed the key-note of Scripture, for without that love man would have had no revelation. That love shone forth most clearly when Jesus Christ died for men; but our reason shows us that a revelation such as we possess was a necessary complement of that sacrifice. A revelation without an atonement would have been impossible; for it would have been a message of irremediable woe, presenting the alternative of disbelief or despair; and a little reflection will convince us that an atonement without a revelation, a sacrifice for man which none could know of, and none could believe in, is to our limited reason so improbable, as almost to amount to an impossibility. We may, therefore, rightly

expect to find the love of God, which shines forth so brightly in the last pages of the Redemptive Epoch, pervading every portion of the sacred books that compose it. And so we do find it. God's mercy, longsuffering, and love are the constant theme of every narrative of history, every song of praise. The long line of history, prophecy, and psalm is irradiated with the light of love that shines from Calvary, and it is in the beams of that light that its truth and reason become apparent.

The second point in which the Spirit bears witness to the truth of the books of the Redemptive Epoch is in the evidence they show forth of God's justice. We see this attribute preeminently displayed in the life, sufferings, and death of Christ, offering Himself as a satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Sin thus obtained its full meed of punishment, and yet the sinner was forgiven. How apt we are to forget this, to underrate the magnitude of Christ's burthen and Christ's sufferings!

It is in showing forth this attribute of justice, that the earlier books of the period are especially valuable. As the actions of men in those times lacked the motive power of eternal rewards or eternal punishments to attract or dissuade them, so the abstraction of this element above our reason or knowledge, enables us better to appreciate the dealings of God with man during his life on earth. We find, as we might expect, that the Almighty does exercise an immediate ingerence and action in human affairs; that He does not, as is taken for

granted in the cold and heartless theology of the present day, leave all things here below to be arranged by immutable laws, and reserve or postpone His own direct action until the world of the future. The idea of 'the crown of glory' is so predominant in the next or Spiritual Epoch, that all human things appear like dross: it was right, therefore, that there should be a portion of Holy Writ in which the Spirit should witness that not only is this world a state of probation, but that it is a state of existence as much created by God as heaven itself; that He can be as well served here below as He can in heaven, were man only pure enough so to worship Him; and that man and the affairs of men are the subject of His unceasing providence and care, 'all things working together for good to those that love Him.'

It would be a curious, and at the same time sorrowful task, to analyse how far this feeling of the interference of God in the affairs of men has been deadened in the hearts of the highly educated classes by the tendency of all books, without exception, of modern philosophy. We may also safely affirm that the progress of sound social and political economy, the advance of science, the conquests of man over matter, have all tended to produce the same effect. The discovery and adaptation of these great social, economical, and physical laws, and their vast results, have led men to worship statistics, to believe in numbers, to become, almost in spite of themselves, positivists, until, at

last, having insensibly come to believe that man is not a free agent, but merely the creature of circumstances, God, in whose image he was made, is converted into a mere synonyme for the laws of nature and science. This view of God and man, and of their relations, is ably propounded in the 'Edinburgh Review' of last October, in an article to which reference is made in a note at the end of the present volume. But without going the length of that article as to the supernatural, or adopting the views of Buckle as to the immutable laws that govern human events and human history, many excellent people have gone much farther than they have any idea in that direction. To such it will be worth while to repeat the axiom, *that freewill in man involves freewill in God*; that if man is free to do anything, or to abstain from doing anything, God is also free to prevent him from doing, or to compel him to do it, as He may see best. Now, man's freewill is at the bottom of all belief in revelation: we may discard the idea of that freewill, but if we do so, we ought in consistency to discard the Bible and Christianity also. God cannot be just, and yet reward or punish beings who are not free agents. The fact that God directs and overrules our actions, does not make us at all less free agents. It is the *motive* God looks at, not whether He has allowed us to carry out our wishes. It is this that constitutes the sin of evil thoughts, and we can see that if those thoughts were not checked, but were all allowed

to issue in acts, no further doubts could be entertained on the subject of hell, for this world would fully represent its worst features. But, as has been stated, *free-will* does not necessitate *free-act*, and we can see a homely illustration of this every day in our nurseries: we have no power to modify in any way our children's wills, but we can and do prevent them from beating each other and tumbling down stairs.

The foregoing reflections may serve to clear up some of our thoughts as to the antagonism of fixed law and special Providence about which so much has been said, and which has been shortly alluded to before in the present volume. It is as the especial revelation of God's direct government of the world that the Old Testament is invaluable; and this is the real reason why that especial revelation is so bitterly and incessantly attacked by the pseudo-philosophers of the present day,—men who aim at achieving a sort of eclectic Positivism, in which instead of, like Comte, eliminating the Divine element (as we understand the word divine), they carefully preserve it, and assign it a place of honour nowhere! The task of these writers is not easy; professing to believe Christianity and the Bible, and compelled by their theories to deny much that they find in revelation, they try to escape by setting themselves up as champions of the '*dignity*' of the Almighty, and the phrase that He cannot break His own laws occurs over and over again in the face of repeated revelations to the contrary in the

Bible. It is not, however, so much these writers as the general tone of thought and of literature that tend to withdraw men's minds from God Himself to fix them on the laws that He has ordained.

Another attribute of God that so harmonises with the conscience of man, that its constant presence is a witness of the Spirit to Holy Writ, is the attribute of truth. It will doubtless have been noticed that the same attributes of God which were quoted in the argument from analogy, as constituting, from their harmony with the conscience of man, and therefore their analogy with *natural* religion, an argument in favour of the Bible, are again brought forward here as leading instances of the witness of the Spirit to the truth of Scripture. And so it ought to be. For what is conscience but the voice of the Spirit of God speaking to the soul of the individual man; and what is revelation, but the voice of the same Spirit speaking to the souls of all men? Hence they are, and must be, identical in their teachings and tendency; and this portion of the argument as to the witness of the Spirit, being one with the argument from analogy, must inevitably read like a twice-told tale. It will not be our duty to stop now and consider this attribute of the truth of God; a new school of theology has risen up who proclaim themselves the champions of that truth: how far they deserve the title, and whether the term 'assailants of the truth of God' is not more justly their due, will be considered in a future chapter. As it is, however, we may assert as undisputed that

the attribute of truth and the four attributes of the personality of God to be found throughout Holy Writ, are a portion of the witness of the Spirit to the soul of man that the Bible is inspired of God.

We will next consider the witness of the Spirit to the truth of the books that constitute the third or Spiritual Epoch of Holy Writ. These books, culminating in the Revelation of St. John, teem with allusions to that heavenly Jerusalem, that crown of glory, that eternal life, which had just been earned for man, the good news of which their authors were commissioned to promulgate. This, and their sublime morality and code of ethics,—a morality which, if attained by man, would make this world a temporary heaven, — are the witness of the Spirit of God to their truth. We can gather from these Scriptures what the oral teaching of their authors must have been, and, after reading them, we no longer wonder at the alacrity with which their hearers accepted the crown of martyrdom. There is in them a certainty of truth, a full persuasion, the gift of the Spirit of God,—a gift not to be obtained by those who, instead of believing and preaching, doubt and dispute.

The instances we have brought forward are but a very few of those innumerable spiritual truths by which the Bible speaks to the conscience of men, and which we have here called the witness of the Spirit. By God's mercy, these truths are all-sufficient to persuade and enlighten those who are willing to believe. But to be read aright, to be

understood, taken in, and appreciated, they must be read with the help of their Divine Author. Human reason alone is not competent for the task. The required help is, however, we know, always given when asked for, that is, when asked for with a will; for we possess a gracious promise that such requests will always be granted. It is in this promise that is to be found the true and only solution of all our doubts and difficulties.

This last witness of the Spirit is His fullest and clearest manifestation of Himself. By it He tells our souls, in words that none who hear can mistake, that it is not by books, by languages, or by study that we can attain the truth; but that a healthy moral perception and a saving faith are entirely His gift, freely bestowed upon all who from their hearts desire to have it. But before we can cherish such wish we must get rid of somewhat of our self-sufficiency; we must give up the notion that we can by searching find out God; we must be prepared to ask humbly for an explanation of difficulties, instead of *determining* to clear them up for ourselves. There are but few educated men who have passed through the earlier and more sanguine years of life without having their faith tried, and their minds disturbed, by fancied Scripture difficulties; it is the form of temptation to which the evil spirit most frequently resorts in such cases. Let those, then, who have been so blest by God as to be brought to a full and complete belief in the truth of His Word, not find in such belief a ground of boasting or of pride, but

remember that it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

We now come to the second division of our subject, the witness of the Spirit of God to the truth of the Bible in the predictions of prophecy,—a witness that appeals to our intellect and reason just as His witness through the moral truths appeals to our conscience. This argument, the confirmation of prophecy, 'the word of prophecy made more sure,'* has ever been one of the foundation-stones of the Christian faith. It was essentially so to the Jewish people and the early Church. They possessed *the same* Scriptures of the Old Testament that we do now; but it never occurred to them to question their genuineness, their truth, or their historical accuracy. We can, therefore, well understand the triumphant tone of conviction with which the inspired evangelist uses the phrase, 'that the Scripture might be fulfilled.' This was, indeed, the main argument of their faith, for Christianity had not then been tried, as it has now, through 1800 years, and men were not then able to judge of the tree by its fruits. It is for this last reason, because we feel and know for ourselves the truth and inspiration of Christianity, because the experience of these many centuries has shown forth its life-giving power, that the fulfilment of prophecy is no longer that vital argument, that question of life and death, that

* 2 Peter i. 19 (Greek).

it was to the early Church. As years have rolled on, the position of the two dispensations almost seems to have changed; the old books having become obscured by the long lapse of time, that which never admitted the shadow of a doubt, when seen in the clear light of those early days, is now a theme for the carping and cavilling of our neological students; while all but avowed infidels being compelled to bow before the books of the New Testament, those books which formerly were founded upon the Old, now in their turn come to the rescue, and, pointing to the fulfilment of the prophecy, command us to infer therefrom the inspiration of the prophet. Whichever way we may choose to take it, this reciprocal evidence is a powerful testimony of the Spirit of God to the truth of the Bible. We see events stated with detail and accuracy, but in a highly figurative strain, not, as we have before remarked, in a literal, matter-of-fact, prosaic narrative, that everybody *must* understand, but, on the contrary, capable of being misunderstood and misapplied, and requiring the spiritual light of faith to enable their meaning to be seen. These utterances we find 400, 600, 800, 1200 years after strictly and circumstantially fulfilled, and that by the great founder of the Christian religion. That we may not mistake or overlook their application to Himself, He vouchsafed to point out their true meaning during His life on earth. By so doing He, at the same time, gave to His disciples grounds for their faith in Himself; and He has left to us an argument that ought, if it

does not, to silence cavillers and unbelievers in the prophetic writings.

It will be necessary, in concluding this chapter, to call to mind once more, that all the civilisation and happiness that has resulted from Christianity is but another instance of the witness of the Spirit to its truth. It is to the moral excellence of its precepts, and to the example of those true believers whose obedience constitutes them the salt of the earth, that all this advance of the human race is due. In a previous chapter we endeavoured to put in strong relief the contrast between Christian civilisation and all other forms of worship and social polity, and we deduced therefrom the argument, that these latter states, with their false and fabled religions, could not be the ultimate condition for which man was created. Would that we could now reverse the picture, and, pointing triumphantly to the family of Christian nations, exclaim, Here is the type of Christian civilisation and Christian brotherhood! But it is not so. What we here behold is but a faint outline of what man, with the light of the Gospel, might have achieved, and indeed might still achieve. This, however, is not to be; our full destiny is reserved for that world of the future where sin and Satan will be unknown. Yet even this imperfect fulfilment of man's destinies, this Gospel, thwarted at every turn by sin and unbelief, has produced fruits that form a powerful witness of the Spirit to the truth of revelation. Perhaps the most evident

and conspicuous of these fruits of Christian civilisation at the present moment, is the empire to which it is our happiness to belong,—an empire whose laws, the spirit in which they are administered, whose patriarchal form of society, whose established Church and free congregations, one and all, take their tone from that English Bible handed down to us from our forefathers—the well-known volume whose sober binding is to be seen in every house and cottage, and which a reverent fondness almost induces us to look upon, not as a translation, but as the original Word of God.

It is not, however, in a spirit of pride that an Englishman ought to contemplate his great advantages, and the manifest signs of God's blessing which his country displays. No; like every other country, we have much cause for humbleness and sorrow; but, year by year, we can see that our policy and our public men aim at a higher standard, and that the nation acquires a truer insight into her vast duties and tremendous responsibilities. May we not, therefore, indulge a hope, that it will please God to keep our candle before Himself, so that, as years roll on, we may become a worthier, though still most unworthy, witness of the Spirit to the truth of His Word?

CHAPTER VI.

BIBLE ELUCIDATION.

The Argument recapitulated and analysed — The Bible the single inspired Rule of Faith — Religion appeals first to the Heart — afterwards to the Understanding — Christianity the Working Man's Religion — Bible Elucidation should be respectful and conventional — should be inductive and not deductive — We should be Learners, not Teachers — Bible must be explored by the Light of Conscience — Realistic Word-Pictures, Word-Portraits, and Word-Landscapes—Resemblances stated to exist between heathen Customs and Jewish Laws — No true Elucidation without the Help of the Holy Spirit.

AS we have now completed our outline of arguments in favour of Christianity and of the Bible, it will be worth while for a time to look back and observe how far, when united, they build up an edifice of proof. We began by showing that, *primâ facie*, we had good reason to expect that God would give a revelation of Himself and of His will to His creatures, and that such revelation, if given, would necessarily be true, and would also most probably be able to trace its origin in the earliest period of the earth's existence. These considerations brought us to the conclusion that in the Bible, or nowhere, such revelation is to be found, and forced

upon us the alternative of Christianity or simple Deism or Atheism. The Bible, therefore, comes before us supported by a high degree of *primâ facie* probability that it is a revelation from God, and when in consequence, we commence a respectful survey of the Book itself, we are struck not only by the high and unearthly strain of its morality and of its doctrines, but also by the close analogy of its teachings and its narrative to what our conscience tells us *ought to be*, and to what our observation and reason tell us *is* the case. This analogy of revealed to natural religion we went into at some length, and at last we found that not only the lessons of the Bible, but that even its difficulties, forced upon us the conclusion that the same Divine Being who made and governs the world was also the Author of this revelation of Himself and His dealings with man. The argument then stood thus: sharing ourselves the general belief in the Bible and Christianity—for we repudiated from the first any intention to discard the evidence of our senses as to the fruits borne by Christianity, to give up for the time the faith of our fathers, and to become what is called in the jargon of controversialists an impartial judge—we find, to strengthen our faith, first, that there exists no other religion that can for a moment claim to be a revelation of the Most High, and that therefore we must believe the Bible or nothing; and, secondly, that in continuing our firm faith in the Bible we do not offend either conscience or reason, for that the one chimes in with Bible morality, Bible

doctrine, and salvation through Christ, while the other readily accepts the whole Bible revelation as analogous to God's government of the world. Not claiming for the argument thus far the right to be considered conclusive, though of considerable weight, and satisfactory to those who have thrown in their lot with Christianity, we proceeded to consider the further evidence of the truth under three heads: — first, the intrinsic qualities of the Bible itself; secondly, the mass of external historical evidence by which it is supported; and thirdly, the witness to its truth of the Holy Spirit of God testifying with power to the soul of man.

Many volumes have been written on each of these heads of argument, the second especially involves for its elucidation a library of books; but it has been endeavoured to put in a condensed form the more salient of these facts and arguments, and to show that the Christian man may have good ground for his belief without going into all the wearisome details of modern controversialists. It is the great advantage that pure Christianity possesses over the false religions, that it is not learned from tradition or from any school, but that everyone goes, and is bound to go, to the fountain-head, the Bible, for his knowledge of the truth. But that this should be the case it is necessary that the Bible alone, and nothing beyond and beside the Bible, should contain the Divine revelation. Those, therefore, who desire to make religion a matter of tradition or a matter of Church teaching, and those who support the idea that re-

ligion is the truthful essence distilled by human skill from human books, the two extremes, the Romanist and the neologian, both agree in denying to Scripture the quality that removes it from the category of ordinary books, that of being the *single* inspired rule of faith. But the result of this denial of the true rights of the Bible involves the further idea that our religion is to be found in other books besides that Scripture whose claim to be the single rule of faith they deny, and this again leads to the inevitable conclusion that religion is an affair of the head and not of the heart. But if it were an affair of the head merely, we may feel sure that it would be so clear and self-evident that no man could possibly question or doubt. We cannot imagine that when the truths of mathematics are capable of demonstration that cannot be gainsaid, when botany and chemistry yield up their secrets to observation and analysis, religion alone, the revelation of God and the doctrine that is to save man's soul, should be so buried in books that we know not where to find it, and so confused and doubtful in its utterance that we cannot with any certainty separate it from the mass of human composition and human fables that overwhelm it like a flood. It is a sad sight to see men toiling to explain in books, some talented and bright, others ponderous and dull, the nature, and properties, and doctrines of this *head* religion, and to feel that all this 'Pelion on Ossa piled' of pedantic German hair-splitting never soothed a dying pillow, never saved a soul. And

why on this momentous question has so much human industry produced a result so weak and unsatisfactory? The reason is simple and soon told, it is that religion must be felt before it can be understood, that it appeals first to the heart and only in the second place to the understanding, and lastly, that its palpable exponent is a single volume which we call the Bible, and that beyond and beside that there is no certain religious truth for man. We can see how it happens that Christianity is emphatically the poor man's religion; he obtains the water of life pure from the fountain-head, not diluted with human wisdom; he has not the temptation, incident to a highly cultivated intellect, to consider God's Word foolishness, and either to leave it unread or to read it in a censorious and suspicious spirit.

We find, then, the question resolve itself into two parts:—First, If God's revelation of Himself to man is to be found in Church traditions, or in various books, or in one book of mixed truth and error, it follows that it is a religion of the intellect, and not of the affections—that it must ever be an empyrical and not an exact science, as nothing certain can ever be known about it—and, lastly, that its statements, not being inspired, must belong to that most unsatisfactory class of evidence which we call hearsay; or, secondly, the revelation, being contained in *one* book inspired and true, will be within the reach of and accessible to everybody—will teach its quota, all true and enough for salvation, to the

simple, slightly educated, working man, and will also teach its quota, all true and not one word too much, to the ablest and most intelligent scholar.

In the one case a life may be spent before we begin to arrive at truth, in the other we have been studying nothing but truth from the moment we first opened the Bible.

There is an anecdote in Eusebius which affords an apt illustration of how completely Christianity is the working man's religion, how evidently opposed it is in its essence to those distinctions of esoteric and exoteric which appear to harmonise so well with the new theology. The Roman police in Palestine, in the time of Domitian, considering that they scented a plot in the Christian doctrine of the second advent, and the future reign of Christ on earth, seized the grandsons of Jude, our Lord's brother, and sent them prisoners to Rome, doubtless considering that, as the nearest collateral relatives of our Saviour, and as the representatives of David's line, they were the pretenders to the future kingdom. Domitian had them brought into his own presence, but when he saw the horny hands* of plain labouring men, he felt that from such pretenders the Roman power had nothing to fear. How much does this story teach us, how clearly does it show that the true religion of Christ is the poor man's creed, is the labourer's birthright! Not

* Εἶτα τὰς χεῖρας τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιδεικνύναι μαρτύριον τῆς αὐτουργίας.—Euseb., H. E. iii. 20.

only was our blessed Saviour Himself a working man, not only were His apostles fishermen and men of low degree, but even in the second generation after His death, His own nearest earthly relatives, though, doubtless from their relationship important members of the Church, proved indeed to be such by their persecution, continued to hold their primitive position of working men. May we not also learn the further lesson, that there must be in the ministry of God's Church room for Peter as well as for Paul, room for the earnest spiritual working man as well as for the gifted, zealous, highly-educated graduate?

These thoughts of the simplicity of the truths which make up a saving faith may justly precede the consideration of the question which forms the subject of the present chapter, How, and in what spirit, ought the Word of God to be examined and elucidated, for, in the face of recent books, we cannot bring ourselves to write the word 'criticism' as applied to the Bible.

In examining and elucidating the Bible, it will, in the first place, be our duty to remember that all sound theologians, from the early fathers up to the present time, have treated Holy Scripture, whose language they were examining, or whose doctrines or facts they were discussing, with the utmost reverence and respect, as being indeed the inspired Word of God. This earnest and reverential mode of treatment has been hitherto so universal, except among professed infidels and sceptics, as to

have acquired the epithet *conventional*, as being 'agreed upon' by Christian men of all views and all opinions. For some reason or other, this mode of treating Scripture is eminently distasteful to certain writers of the present day,* and one, by far the most able among them, even designates it as 'hardening.'† Where this effect of a humble bearing towards God and His Word is to be traced in our Old English theology, in our Barrows, Tillotsons, Leightons, and Taylors, it is difficult to imagine; and we look in vain for any *softening* influence in the contrary treatment, as exemplified in Carlyle, Tom Paine, and Voltaire. Notwithstanding, therefore, the *dicta* of the new school, we will venture to lay down, as a first rule for sound and useful Bible enquiry, that we ought not to stray from the 'conventional' respect and deference due to every word in the Bible. There can indeed be no question that, whether in art or in literature, this conventional treatment of sacred subjects is a necessity of our earthly state; and it is curious to observe, in the catacombs of Sant' Agnese and San Calisto at Rome, how very soon the early Christians drifted into the conventional treatment of the portrait of our Saviour. We see in these catacombs drawings dating from not more than 150 or 200 years after Christ, in which He is represented as the Good Shepherd, but evidently idealised, the reverence and respect felt for Him not

* Essays and Reviews, Preface.

† Stanley, Jewish Church. Introd., p. xxxviii.

allowing a realistic treatment even of His portrait. Many will probably remember the shock they experienced, some twelve or fifteen years ago, at a picture of the workshop at Nazareth, exhibited in the Royal Academy. Did the absence of a conventional spirit tend to make that picture respectful or devotional, and did it contrast favourably with the 'hardening' effect of the conventional Madonna di Santo Sisto, or Transfiguration of Raphael? The reason for the conventional treatment of sacred subjects in books is akin to that which has produced this treatment in painting and sculpture. When, from long lapse of time, we cannot reproduce a true portrait, any attempt at realistic treatment is essentially false and untrue; it as much as says, 'Here is a real resemblance,' which the artist knows not to be the case. Such, also, is the effect of similar treatment in literature; it as much as says, 'I know, and will show you, how matters were 4,000 years ago; here is a realistic word-picture for you,'—the fact being, that what is presented to you as a true and full account is in a great degree the offspring of the imagination of the author, or at best is an attempt to convert into a living incident a few dry bones of scattered hints. Hence there would seem to be no true ground for rejecting the conventional treatment, founded upon a sense of God's omnipotence and man's nothingness, which Scripture has hitherto received at the hands of the best and soundest of its illustrators and commentators. That ignorant men have abused

the vocabulary of the Bible, that hypocrites have made broad their phylacteries inscribed with its texts, will not justify us in discarding a conventional politeness and respect in our dealings with Scripture which we show to our earthly sovereign, or in parting with our main safeguard against undue familiarity and an impertinent spirit.

The next caution to be observed in Bible elucidation is that we should remember that, to arrive at truth, the same rules must be followed in moral and in physical science, in examining and elucidating the Bible, and in working out the results of natural philosophy. Hence we see that we must not first make for ourselves a system of theology, and then endeavour to force the Bible to harmonise with it, rejecting all discordant facts and doctrines as *ipso facto* untrue. To reason thus would be to fall into the old error of deductive philosophy, the master first devising his system, and then making facts square with it as best he could; and to ignore the golden rule of inductive science, that from experimental truth we must reason up to general principles, which has formed the foundation-stone of all modern discovery. Thus, inductively treated in a reverent spirit, there is no end to the treasures of moral and spiritual truth that the Bible will yield to the enquiring believer. But as in science difficulties have been unravelled one by one, and certain facts of this class remain unsolved and insoluble by man, so in theology difficulties of the same kind appear, which from time to time yield

to the discoveries of some fresh scientific or physical facts, while others are found in their very nature unintelligible to the human intellect. The important part played by the new discovery of spectrum analysis in elucidating portions of the first chapter of Genesis, has been noticed in a previous chapter, and is a remarkable instance of the manner in which from time to time difficulties are cleared up; while the three problems noticed at page 38 may be compared with the impossible and imaginary symbols which puzzle the brain of even the tyro in mathematics. It is not by ignoring such difficulties, nor is it by attempting to explain them, that our predecessors or ourselves have accomplished the vast strides we have made in science, but simply by bowing before what we cannot understand, and waiving all endeavours to explore its origin, making use of the impossible symbol ($\sqrt{-1}$) as a means for arriving at higher truths. What is this but to bow before the origin of evil, and then, from the evil we see existing, deduce the infinite mercy of God in the means contrived for its cure, and for the purification of the souls of men from this universal, destructive, corroding leprosy?

Another point we must observe is, that we must go to the Bible to learn, and not to teach. Not only must our language and mode of thought be reverent and conventional, not only must our system of Bible study be inductive, and not deductive, seeking to evolve from every doctrine, every mercy, and every judgement the hidden and higher

truths which they teach, not striving to *make* the Bible say anything, that it may accord with some favourite notion or idea of our own,—but we must besides all this read the Book in a faithful humble spirit, analogous to the feeling with which we explore, by the light of science, God's dealings in the animate or inanimate universe.

It is not to be assumed, from what has gone before, that we mean that from the Bible we are to work back inductively to those great truths which God has revealed to each man separately and personally in the voice of conscience, and that if we find the results to clash, we are to reject conscience. No; any such discord is impossible for this simple reason; that the light of conscience is the light by which the Bible must be read, and by which alone it can be read. It is, if we may use the simile, the key to the Bible cypher. The direct response of the Bible teaching to the voice of conscience throughout, is the principal witness of the Spirit to the truth of Scripture. Hence, any seeming contradiction proves that we have not read Scripture aright, that we have not arrived at its true meaning. For instance, a superficial view of Scripture might induce the idea that the Almighty did not disapprove such patent evils as slavery or polygamy. How erroneous and how unwarranted such a supposition would be has been shown in a previous chapter. So, again, the slaughter of the Canaanites has been explained on broad principles a few pages back. Some readers may dissent from

the views thus expressed; but they would be greatly in error if, because they disapproved the explanation given, and could not offer another, they therefore jumped at the conclusion that God sanctioned massacre and bloodshed. The Bible and conscience both teaching lessons of love and forgiveness, the former must be read by the light of the latter, and in such case the conclusion would be, not the intrinsic lawfulness of war and massacre, but that we do not know all the circumstances under which the Israelites executed God's vengeance, and therefore cannot explain it. These cases have been selected partly as prominent and well-known 'difficulties,' but mainly because, having been fully discussed when referred to incidentally in previous pages, they do not require to be gone into here, and thereby to disturb, by a long parenthesis, the sequence of these few remarks.

In concluding our observations on the proper spirit and course of Bible enquiry, we would also explain that the objection to realistic word-pictures applies to word-figure-painting, not to word-landscapes; it is a protest against setting up word-graven images of men and women, not against geographical description. The features of a country do not greatly alter, and an accurate knowledge of locality is essential to profitable reading; but men and women, their tone of thought and extent of knowledge, are constantly varying, while their motives and springs of action are known only to God and themselves. Hence a book of word-pictures of sacred landscape,

like Stanley's 'Palestine,' is most delightful and instructive reading, while the same author's book of word-pictures of men and facts, his 'Lectures on the Jewish Church,' is perhaps of all recent books one of the most dangerous. Those who wish to go farther into this question of the extremely untrustworthy nature of word-portraits, will have a good instance before them in studying Macaulay's portraits of Marlborough and William III. by the light of Paget's '*New Examen*,' and of the chapter on the subject in that most able and suggestive book, Lucas's '*Secularia*.' But the different estimates formed at different epochs in the press and in public estimation of the character of Sir Robert Peel, or the late Prince Consort, or, in fact, of everyone eminent enough to be written about, teach us the same lesson. Surely we are not more likely to be right when describing Abraham or Isaac, Job or Elijah.

There is one other point to which much attention is now given, and the real bearing and true import of which ought to be understood by the Bible elucidator; it is the coincidences which are found to exist between certain religious and social customs of nations neighbouring to Judæa, and the corresponding customs commanded in the law of Moses. Much has been made of these coincidences as an argument against Scripture; we will therefore consider one or two of the more prominent, with a view to ascertain what *they do in fact prove*, and whether the investigation of these coincidences is,

as it would naturally seem to be, an innocent archæological pursuit, or whether it be forging the deadly weapon against the Bible that some imagine.

The rite of circumcision, and the alleged similarity between the priestly robes of the Jews and those in use among the Egyptians, will be enough for our present purpose. We will assume it to be a fact that the mysterious rite was, as is stated, common to the Phœnicians and Egyptians as well as to the Jews. If it were so, what does it prove? Not, as Dr. Stanley states,* that there is any doubt 'whether Abraham received it from these countries or these countries from Abraham,' because we happen to know, from Genesis xvii. 11–14, that Abraham received it directly from God as the visible seal of the covenant; but it shows either that those countries took it from Abraham, or else that God, to ease the trial of Abraham's faith, ordered a rite which the mode of thought and feeling of the times in which he lived would not have made repugnant to him as it would be now to us, the custom being received in the more civilised and settled countries around him. And the second instance we have adduced furnishes a sort of argument in favour of the latter interpretation. Of course we see that God, in putting forth the Levitical Church government and ceremonies, might have commanded any priestly dress that He thought right; but we can also see that in that early, childish, and therefore eminently

* Stanley, Jewish Church, p. 24.

traditional and conservative epoch of the human race, the selection of a costume for the priesthood differing altogether from those robes to which a sacred character was already affixed, would have been a great and probably unnecessary trial of their weak faith and wavering constancy. Even in these advanced times, when men are ashamed to confess any reverence for externals, and when the awe of our grand old Bible has not power to blunt the edge of even episcopal irony, could we listen with as much respect to the exhortation of a Bishop in beef-eater's costume, as in the ample surplice and lawn sleeves with which from our childhood his sacred office has been associated? These considerations may tend to show that a complete change in the dress of the priesthood would have been a great trial to the Jewish people. God judged it to be unnecessary, and therefore did not command it, the dress ordered being a modification of the received sacred costume. It was in many respects entirely different from any other, but in certain respects it partook of the general character of the sacerdotal dress.

Thus we can see God's mercy in selecting a distinctive rite for the whole people, and a distinctive dress for the priesthood, which were not repugnant or distressing to their feelings, either national or individual. We can see in this the mercy which tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, but we look in vain for any argument against Scripture, or for any justification of the fear that seems to be often

entertained that such facts when discovered militate against its truth and authenticity.

Finally, we may observe that the Bible elucidator has an easy task if he sets about his work in a humble prayerful spirit, *believing the Book he is writing about*; he will in such case receive assistance from on high that will clear his spiritual and mental vision, and make all things plain and simple to him. If undertaken in any other spirit, his work will be labour in vain. He may be strong enough to instil doubts,—feeble indeed must he be if he have not power for that thankless task, — but to convince, to speak trumpet-tongued to the souls of men, requires the aid of the Spirit of God, and that Spirit is only promised to humble, faithful, and hearty prayer.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FREEHANDLERS.

The ultimate Result of Freehandling — Books to be considered — The Bible patronised — Dr. Stanley's Word-Portraits — Responsibility shirked in 'Essays and Reviews' — Colenso's Work naïve from Egotism — Scripture to be treated as 'any other Oriental History' — Dr. Stanley's Schedule of Authorities — Josephus — The Koran — Number of the Jews at the Exodus — The Exodus and its Preparation — The Sacrifices in the Desert — The Battle at Gibeon — Joshua's Miracle — The Freehandlers and the Church.

'THERE is no mistake about it; why should we deceive ourselves? What is at stake is not Protestantism, it is Christianity, in its broadest sense; it is even more than that, it is the existence of any definite religion at all. Natural religion is only a fond invention of book-writers. Every religion that lives, and moves, and has a being, is a positive religion; that is, a religion with a Church, with a ceremonial, and with articles of belief. What are these articles of belief? In their fullest expression and deepest meaning, they are so many solutions of those great problems before which the intellect of man has at all times recoiled: creation, the origin of evil, atonement for sin, and

the future state. The doctrines of a religion are, in fact, revealed metaphysics.'*

Thus writes M. Edmond Scherer, in the essay he published in 1861, under the title of '*La Crise du Protestantisme*,' and which he put forward as a review of 'Essays and Reviews.' It is in no spirit of regret or sorrow that he traces the doctrines of the neological school to their inevitable result, in the abandonment, not only of Christianity, but of any definite religion whatever. M. Scherer's views are well known, and may be described as coinciding with those of Bishop Colenso. He looks upon all religions as containing their portion of spiritual truth, and finds the word of God as much in the Sikh Gooroos as in the Christian Bible. He is therefore disposed to welcome the new apostles of unbelief; but when he comes to look closely into their doctrines, into the cold and dreary negation of all truth in which their essence consists, he recoils before them, and, after pointing out in the words we have just quoted that they involve disbelief in every religion existing, or that ever has existed, he goes on to describe, in the following words, the result of their general adoption, which throughout his essay he argues to be inevitable.

'At first sight this gradual emancipation of faith, and the corresponding onward movement of religion in the paths of spirituality, appear to con-

* Revue des Deux Mondes, vol. iii. p. 422.

stitute a natural process, by means of which a constant equilibrium can be maintained between faith on the one hand, and the human intellect on the other. It would seem that all difficulties are solved, and that the future religious condition of mankind is being foreshadowed as a sort of Christian Rationalism, or Rational Christianity, whichever name we may prefer, a religion in which earnestness and zeal in practice would co-exist with absolute freedom of speculation and thought.

'For my own part, nothing would please me better than that such should be the case; but I cannot help asking myself, and I put the question with some little anxiety, Is Christian Rationalism a religion at all? What is, in fact, the residue that we find in the crucible, after all this refining process? Is it the essence of pure doctrine, or does it consist in worthless dregs? This Christianity, doctored and manipulated until it is clear to our intellect, and absolutely conformable to our reason and our conscience, has it any great virtue left? Is it not wondrously like Deism, and has it not all its hollowness and emptiness? Is not the power of any faith to be found as much in its doctrines and miracles themselves, as in their hidden spiritual meaning? Does not a real piety involve the idea of some little superstition, and can it exist in a religion devoid of that popular metaphysic, those coruscations of the marvellous, that you are endeavouring to eliminate? Those elements from which you are striving to disengage

your faith, are they not the necessary alloy, without which the precious metal is useless for the rough purposes of life? And, lastly, when criticism has abolished the supernatural as useless, and articles of belief as irrational; when religious sentimentality on the one hand, and remorseless reason on the other, have penetrated and permeated through the faith, and transformed it into their own likeness; when no rule of conduct or belief any longer exists, but the conscience of each individual; when, in a word, man having torn every veil, and probed every mystery, finds himself face to face with that God whom he has been striving to find out, will he not discover that this God is, after all, nothing but man himself, the deified personality of the conscience and reason of man, and that religion, in its endeavour after a higher standard, has, in fact, ceased to exist?'

These are the words of an earnest man, a deep-reasoner, a profound thinker. Sad as they are, and full of sorrow, we accept their conclusions as to the result of the teachings of our neological school, though we reject them as to the power that the writers of this school have achieved, or the influence that is in store for them, in the England of the future. In fact, there is a present antidote in the 'remorseless' nature of their freehandling, and in their defective argumentation. Had they, indeed, the generous, kindly, hearty spirit* of the

* We ought not, perhaps, to dwell too much on the temper

French writer from whom we have quoted, and his lucidity of argument, their position in Church and University would make them formidable opponents. There is one, however, among them to whom applies every word of the panegyric we have just passed on M. Scherer, and it is with deep and sincere grief that we write the name of Dr. Stanley among the 'freehandlers.' But he will have it so. In his preface to his 'Lectures on the Jewish Church,' he arrogates to himself the title, and the book itself proves that it is only too well deserved. It was an evil hour when his earnestness, his genius, his influence, not only at Oxford but over everyone that loves choice literature, noble thoughts expressed in words that breathe, were transferred to the side of the opponents of Scripture inspiration. However, as it is so, in the short remarks we shall be able to make on the books of this school, we shall give his work that precedence which of right belongs to him.

We shall, then, confine our remarks to three books, Stanley's 'Jewish Church,' 'Essays and Reviews,' and Colenso's 'Pentateuch.' Curiously enough, they seem to fall in at once in battle array. There is their leader, a very Bayard or Black

in which such books as 'Essays and Reviews' and Colenso's two volumes are written. Being the works of *ordained ministers*, writing against the faith, there is throughout them a painful feeling of chafing against the chain; we must not look in them for the sober temperate argumentation of the lay opponents of inspiration, such as Scherer, Buckle, and Comte.

Prince of literature; next comes the heavy-armed phalanx, and heavy indeed they are, for the most part,—would that all books as mischievous were equally unreadable! Lastly, the Bishop brings up the rear with his *naïve* work, escorting the impedimenta or baggage, many waggons laden with his wonderful 'discoveries,' the deserted mare's-nests of many a bygone spring.

The first and strongest impression with which the reader would rise from the perusal of these volumes is perhaps the tone of excessive praise and adulation of the Scriptures which pervades them throughout. The Scriptures are remorselessly 'verified,' their fabulous and untrue nature is taken for granted, and all the while they are overwhelmed with excessive adulation, and we are assured that no one except the authors, their German masters, the Germans *en masse*, and such Englishmen as agree with themselves, can understand or appreciate them. The result is a sort of patronising of the Bible which is most unpleasant; and this tone, we regret to add, is most apparent in Dr. Stanley's book, while the Bishop's treatise is less open to animadversion on this score. The result to the mind of the reader is that the Bible is treated much as we treat children beginning to learn to write,—great and indiscriminate praise is bestowed upon their efforts, but all the time the instructor is straightening the down strokes and rounding the pothooks-and-hangers.

Apart from this very serious evil, which is com-

mon to all the three books in greater or less degree, the books themselves are as different as the character and talent of their authors. The volume of lectures is evidently the work of a man of true genius, carried away by his singular power of word-painting, until he is unable to see that, at this distant period, we can know nothing *certainly* about these old patriarchs, except what is revealed to us in Scripture; that all the *adjuncts* to the Scripture narrative that make up his word-portraits are simply imaginary,—pleasant reading, probably useful to many persons, but of no sort of authority or authenticity. Scripture being only the blue colour on his palette—the reds, yellows, and greens being Josephus, the Koran, and Rabbinical tradition—he has come to look upon all his literary pigments as of equal value, and, throughout his volume, treats them with almost absolute impartiality. When we refer to his schedule of authorities, we shall have to point out the untrustworthiness of these sources of information which are placed alongside, and treated *pari passu* with the Bible.

The leading feature of 'Essays and Reviews' is at once put forward in its 'preface,' and can be recognised in every part of the seven essays. It is an endeavour to take the fortress of Scripture by a sort of joint-stock company on the limited liability principle, as we believe it was jokingly proposed to take the fortress of Sevastopol during the winter of 1855. It irresistibly reminds one of the endeavour to avoid the sin of swearing by dividing a dissyllabic

oath between two interlocutors, each repeating one harmless syllable. In fact, being the first of these books, we must not be surprised that the spirit that characterises the greater part of the essays (for we must except plain-spoken Dr. Rowland Williams) is what an Eton boy would shortly and graphically describe as the spirit of shirking. Scripture is to be freely handled in a becoming (i. e., safe) spirit, and nobody is to be answerable for what anybody else may write; and this is the sort of spirit in which an attack on the infallible basis of our faith, an elaborate effort to instil doubt and disbelief, is undertaken by a party of clergymen, headed by the master of one of our chief public schools, and concluded by an Oxford professor! If the subject was less serious, there would be something amusing in this endeavour to avoid, *ab initio*, that responsibility which the literary unity of the book, its single object, so evidently and clearly affixes upon each one of the seven contributors. There is now lying on the table of the writer the *tenth* edition of 'Essays and Reviews,' a five-shilling duodecimo. It must be satisfactory to any one of the seven who really disapproves Dr. Williams's onslaught on prophecy, or Mr. Baden Powell's 'advanced' views, to think that he has had a share, whether responsible for the opinions or not, in placing so many *copies* of them, at so low a price, in the hands of the British public!

The leading feature of Colenso's work is its marvellous egotism and conceit. It can only be de-

scribed by the French epithet *naïve.* The Bishop has lived so long among savages, that he has got to consider himself a sort of superior being, a kind of Manco Capac or Mama Ocla, and he clearly forgot that, when he returned to England, he would find himself among fully-clad, reasoning, educated men. Hence Scripture, from his point of view, is a thing to be put down, and arithmetic is the powerful engine by which it is to be abated. The Bishop rushes about, wielding his arithmetical tomahawk, and laying freely into any fragment of Scripture, or argument in its defence, that comes within his reach. The book is not calculated to do much harm, and ought, perhaps, hardly to have been included in the same category with the other two volumes. So many refutations of it have appeared while the present pages were in course of being written, that it will not be necessary to notice it at great length. In fact, the Bishop's power for mischief has been greatly neutralised by the tone of his book and the free ventilation of its contents. We in England do not want a prophet, and the British public looks forward without any impatience, and with great equanimity, for that revelation, the coming advent of which he announced to us so solemnly in the following words:—'I cannot but feel that, having thus been impelled to take an active part in showing the groundlessness of that notion of Scripture inspiration which so many have long regarded as the very foundation of their faith and hope, a *demand may be made upon me* for something to sup-

ply the loss, for something to fill up the aching void. . . . . In the present stage of the discussion, *it is impossible for me to answer fully as I would to such a demand*, though I trust to be able to do so before my work is brought to its close!' He winds up by hoping that '*my lately-published Commentary* on the Epistle to the Romans may minister in some measure to the comfort and support of troubled minds under present circumstances.' Allah is great, and Mahomet is his prophet! But we fear the Bishop will find out that to be a prophet in England, in the nineteenth century, requires something more than a moderate knowledge of Hebrew, a portion of German, and a mastery of the Rule of Three! And we would further remind him that, even at his own estimate of the result of his present labours, he is not the proper person to undertake his self-imposed mission; for it is not to the journeyman who pulls down our old house that we apply, as architect, to design us a new one.

We will now proceed to consider a few points in detail of Dr. Stanley's book, and afterwards a few of the leading neological difficulties, as samples of the three works. Dr. Stanley cites a saying of Arnold, that 'what Wolf and Niebuhr have done for Greece and Rome seems sadly wanted for Judæa,' and his implied approbation of the wish thus 'boldly' expressed affords the key to his present book. His sympathies are with Dr. Temple & Co., 'those who, in this country, have

hazarded worldly interests and popular favour in the noble though often perilous pursuit of Divine truth.'* Colenso also gets his full meed of approbation, and though originality could not be assigned to him, force and detail are mentioned as his characteristics.† His arguments are, however, assumed to be irresistible and incontrovertible, as indeed are any arguments, new or old, that tell against the absolute truth and accuracy of the Old Testament. In fact, the whole tendency of the book cannot be better expressed than by quoting a sentence from the note of panegyric on Colenso's labours, which has been added at the end of the volume:—'If we extend to the narrative of the different parts of the Old Testament the same laws of criticism which we apply to other histories, especially to Oriental histories, its very errors and defects may be reckoned among its safeguards, and at any rate are guides to a true apprehension of its meaning and its intention.' No words of ours can add to the strength of this most remarkable sentence, which deserves to be read and re-read. The Bible is to be pulled to pieces, in the spirit of a Niebuhr, or a Wolf analysing myths and fables, the old women's stories of Greece and Rome, which passed from mouth to mouth, constantly altered and distorted for centuries before they were put in writing. It is to be treated as any other history! The same laws of criticism are to be applied to

* Jewish Church. Introd., p. xiii. † Ibid., p. 521.

it that we apply to any other history, *especially Oriental history*! We have understated the kind of treatment the Old Testament deserves, and is to receive. There was some limit to the vagaries of the imagination and the excesses of untruth among Western nations. The Bible must be treated as we treat Oriental history, with its tissue of audacious falsehood and fables; the treatment that Livy received at the hands of Niebuhr would be far, far too good for the Bible!

Prefixed to each lecture is a schedule of authorities. Among those prefixed to Lecture I., 'The Patriarchs,' we find portions of Scripture and Apocrypha, Josephus, heathen traditions, Jewish traditions in the Talmud, and Mussulman traditions in the Koran. The first of these 'authorities,' Josephus, is quoted *pari passu* with the Bible, as of equal value. When speaking, at the close of his book, of the proposal to reduce the number of the Israelites at the Exodus to some small arbitrary figure, he says that 'the parallel instance of a like tendency to amplification of numbers, in Josephus's "Wars of the Jews," is a decisive proof of the compatibility of such amplification, not, indeed, with an exact or literal, but with a substantially historical narrative, of the series of events in which these errors are embedded.'* Now it is worth considering for a moment what sort of book this 'Wars of the Jews,' which is here

* Jewish Church, p. 521.

cited as parallel in exaggeration to Scripture, may be, and the consideration may perhaps also show us how much weight ought to be given to the 'Antiquities' of the same author, which play so great a part in these lectures generally. The character of Josephus was condensed by Voltaire in one word, 'l'exagérateur Josephe;'* and M. Philarète Chasles, in his admirable essay, 'De l'Autorité historique de Flavius Josephe,' thus alludes to his veracity in terms which we will not weaken by transferring to English:—'Il y avait dans le camp romain un Juif transfuge, spirituel et traître, qui s'est chargé de mentir devant la postérité. C'est son récit qui a trompé l'histoire, et l'ineffable crédulité des siècles doit étonner le philosophe; car son récit est un tissu de chimères dont la fausseté apparaît d'elle-même.'† The historian goes on to analyse his pretended speeches, two hours long, addressed from the top of a hill to the people of Jerusalem, and a multitude of absurdities and falsehoods of the same sort; his egotism, the celebrated mutual killing of the forty in a cave, the fountains flowing for Titus with a deeper stream—anything, in fact, whether falsehood or flattery, by which, traitor and deserter as he was, he might hope to curry favour with his Roman masters. It is to the Old Testament history, distorted by this author, that the Bible is unceremoniously compared; and it is to the work of this author, of which we

* Voltaire, Dictionnaire Philosophique, art. Juifs.

† Études, Chasles, p. 60. Paris: Amyot, 1847.

have given the character above, that the Pentateuch is pronounced to be parallel.

One other of this array of 'authorities' ought to be cited here, but merely by way of protest. The very late date of the Koran, A.D. 610, renders it of no value whatever as an authority for facts that occurred B.C. 1500, and even much earlier. What do we know now, 'by tradition,' of events 300 years before the Advent? These silly Mussulman traditions, though in the 'Lectures on the Jewish Church' they seem to assume a gravity and importance that is almost comical, are unworthy of a place in serious history. With respect to what Gibbon termed the 'incoherent rhapsodies' of the Koran itself, we will only add, in the words of Eliot Warburton, 'that we marvel at the power of credulous fanaticism that could ever have distilled a faith, or even a meaning, out of its fantastic pages.' *

The volume to which we have referred is doubtless destined to be greatly read, and were it not for its ostentatious depreciation of Scripture, not so much in words as by comparing it with fables and traditions and treating the two as of equal value, and its summary dismissal of the genuineness of the earliest canonical books and those on which the whole Bible is founded, as 'rejected by almost all scholars,' † it would be a most attractive work.

* Crescent and Cross, vol. i. p. 118.

† Jewish Church. Introd., p. xxxiii.

As it is, the deep interest of its geographical details, and the singular privilege enjoyed by the author of visiting the cave of Machpelah in company with the eldest son of England, will insure it a vast circulation, and an influence on the minds both of old and young that will not tend, we fear, to make them stronger in the faith.

We will now make a few remarks upon certain difficulties which seem to trouble all our neological instructors; and, to begin, we will allude to the number of the Jews at the time of the Exodus. Protesting, in the first place, against its involving any *real* difficulty when God's power is taken into consideration, we will, instead of going into the details of a subject that is now so much and so generally discussed, quote a precisely similar case of increase which has occurred in our own time to a kindred nation. 'We learn from Mr. Palfrey, the latest and most satisfactory New England historian of New England itself, that the original emigration was confined entirely within a space of twenty years. It was insignificant as compared with the efflux of a single year from the England or Ireland of our own day, yet Mr. Palfrey can estimate its descendants at as many as seven or eight millions, as a constituent element of the late United States. He admits that exactness in such an estimate is not attainable, but he contends that the main elements of the calculation are not to be disputed.' * Mr.

* Lucas, Secularia, pp. 185–186.

Lucas, from whose work we are quoting, then goes into the details of Mr. Palfrey's calculation, and after showing the sound basis on which it stands, he concludes that 'it is a most remarkable inference that so many millions of living persons, either born in New England or tracing their origin to natives of that region, are descendants of the 21,000 Englishmen who went over before the early emigration from England ceased upon the meeting of the Long Parliament. Investigation of the successive accretions from other sources nevertheless helps to substantiate this astonishing assertion.' Mr. Lucas, in conclusion, is able to verify the following fact as having taken place before our eyes. On the continent of North America 21,000 people in 210 years, from A.D. 1650 to A.D. 1860, have become 8,000,000; twenty-one thousand grown into eight millions in two hundred years! And what is the Bible assertion? Why, that seventy persons, or thereabouts, in more than double the time became one million and a half. Remembering how important is the number of terms in a geometrical series, that is, how important is the lapse of time in generations of men, we may fairly assert that the cases are truly parallel. It is fortunate for Mr. Palfrey that his facts and figures are not mixed up with our religious belief, and that therefore he may put them upon paper without the chorus of contradiction and ridicule that constantly waits on the figures and facts of the Bible narrative.

Another instance nearer home may be quoted as

illustrating this question, and showing how far from incredible, apart from miraculous interference, is the increase of population recorded by Moses. In answer to some enquiries as to the rate of increase of a family with which the writer of the present pages is connected, the following statement was received: —'Mr. G. married in 1776, eighty-seven years ago. He had eleven children, only six of whom had issue. The present number of his living descendants, of the *third and fourth* generation, *under twenty-five years of age*, amounts to about one hundred and ninety (190). This is exclusive of a large number of the second generation who are still in the prime of life, and are adding yearly to the number of the third generation.'

If, without going into details, we assume, at the end of 110 years, no more than seventy adult young men of this family to be of an age to be classed with the original patriarch (Mr. G.), we shall, in 220 years, find about 5,000 such adults of this one family. Fifty-seven such cases would give 285,000 young adult males; and remembering that in this calculation *we have excluded* all the past generations, and that the death-rate in those early times was only half what it is now (lives being twice as long), we shall see that, at the rate of the increase of Mr. G.'s family, there might have stood up in 220 years (the shorter of the two disputed periods) a number approaching the 600,000 armed men of whom we read in Exodus, sprung from the seventy who went down into Egypt. How

little would the smaller number, sometimes suggested as more probable, have satisfied that remarkable blessing of fruitfulness which is alluded to no less than three times in the single chapter, Exodus i., at verses 7, 12, and 20, the first of these verses being 'that the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them'! 'There is nothing so deceptive as figures, except facts,'* says the modern cynic: the first half of this saying is eminently applicable to Bishop Colenso's dazzling display of arithmetical fireworks. When the uninitiated read of logarithms and decimals, they think everything must be indisputable: in truth, however, everything depends upon the trustworthiness of our assumptions at starting; and if we begin by begging the question that two and two make five, we can easily prove to everybody's satisfaction that four and four make ten!

* It is not intended here to go into the question of the genealogies; probably the apparent difficulties may result from some transcriber's error in number, or omission of name or names. The lapse of time renders it impossible that any satisfactory solution can be arrived at *now*; no advantage can therefore be derived from discussion, and when we contemplate the injury done to the belief of some by these trifling matters, which are of no consequence whatever to faith or practice, but which through the microscope of unbelief assume a preposterous importance, we cannot help seeing how sound was the advice given us by the inspired Apostle, 'to avoid genealogies' (1 Tim. i. 4; Tit. iii. 9); the *new discovery* of their hopeless obscurity being evidently well known to him.

We will next shortly consider the much-vexed question of the Exodus itself. A vast multitude of people, debased by slavery and sunk in idolatry, had to be induced to believe and to move. If we think for a moment what these two ideas involve, we shall see how difficult was the task. This million and a half (or two millions; for whether the greater or smaller number be received is of no consequence: the important fact is, that the nation had become a vast multitude) were to be free agents, they were not to be coerced mentally or physically, and they were not to be attracted, for the passage to their future home lay across the sea and through the great desert. How was such a multitude of free agents to be induced to believe and to move? Clearly only by signs and wonders, unmistakeable and impressive, repeated over a long time, giving them ample warning to prepare, teaching them the power of the Being who told them to depart, and showing them how devastated even *their* land might be if they stayed. Looked at in this light, how important a feature in the history of the Jewish nation are the successive plagues of Egypt! And if it were not that our neologians question everything, and therefore are amenable to no argument, we would ask them, Is it likely that Pharaoh would have submitted to such trials and troubles for the sake of a paltry detachment of 600 slaves,* about one-tenth of the number employed upon any

* Laborde's hypothesis.

one of his great works? At last the people had become convinced, they were moved and ready in their minds to depart; then the institution of the Passover told them that the time was come, and so prepared were they, that when the last solemn sign of God's power was given, the death of the first-born, nothing was required but to put the kneading-troughs upon the already packed-up bundles of clothing, and they were ready for a start at once. Every detail of the Exodus was part of that *preparation* for the advent of Christ which belongs to every fragment of the Redemptive Epoch. Hence, while we contemplate all these lengthened and elaborate preliminaries, we no longer wonder, for we remember that Israel must move out from a home of four centuries into the desert, and that voluntarily, and with the freewill of every Israelite. We can also see the mercy of God in displaying His power to the idolatrous Egyptians; they had been good friends to Israel though they were now oppressors, and therefore signs and wonders were shown to *them*, so that, had they chosen, they might have been converted and lived. And we may believe that many did so, for, when Israel departed, a mixed multitude went up also, and we may fairly conclude that, among those who went up with Israel, not being of Israel, were many Egyptians who had learned, by the wonderful works of Moses, to fear and worship the God of Jacob.

The fact that the Mosaic law, being intended for the future settled state in the promised land, does

not seem to have been applicable, in all its provisions, to the transition state of the nation during their journey through the wilderness, when every man 'did what was right in his own eyes;' and that the staff of the priestly family must have been insufficient at first to perform all the sacrifices that were hereafter to be offered exclusively by them; seems to afford great delight to the good Bishop. He enters into all the calculations with great glee, and, omitting decimals, he shows that the three priests could not have killed the lambs at the Passover for lack of time, and that each of the three must have dined off eighty-eight pigeons, or thereabouts, per diem;* which is absurd, Q. E. D. It is by such arguments as these that it is seriously endeavoured to set aside Holy Writ! God never insists upon impossibilities, and therefore, clearly, there was a relaxation of the command, which, being only temporary and involving no permanent principle, was not allowed to have a place in Scripture. The command itself we can see to rest upon two great truths, which it was intended to teach to all time: one, that the atoning sacrifice for sin was not to be an occasion of festivity; the other, that those who ministered at the altar were to live by the altar. We might quote, as a sort of antithesis to these temporary relaxations for an exceptional state of society, the temporary institution of equal division of property in the exceptional circumstances of

* Colenso, p. 128.

the early Christian Church. This institution, read with the Sermon on the Mount, might well be supposed by some future enquirer to be intended to be permanent, and its abrogation after society became settled might be considered to prove that no such arrangement ever existed, and that, therefore, the New Testament is unhistorical. Q. E. D. Socialism, as a permanent state of society, is an impossibility, and the argument ultimately stands thus. We find the inspired Apostles, moved by the Holy Spirit, sanctioning temporarily what would be permanently impossible, and we find God, by the mouth of Moses, sanctioning permanently what we see was temporarily impossible.

The miracle of Joshua and the sun, or of the battle of Beth-horon, or Gibeon, as Dr. Stanley calls it, is another trouble to the new school. The Oxford professor seems somehow or other to have picked up the idea that nobody knows or cares anything about this battle ; he twice recurs to the subject, once in the preface, at page ix., and again at the beginning of Lecture XI. On both occasions he makes the same complaint, 'that many who would be scandalised at ignorance of the battles of Salamis or Cannæ, know and care nothing for the battles of Beth-horon and Megiddo.' And again, 'The *very name* of this great battle is far less known to most of us than that of Marathon and Cannæ.' The charge made in the last paragraph may indeed be true ; but for the simple reason that the Scripture battles have not in general received names,

like the battle of Waterloo or Talavera, or the great classical conflicts instanced by Dr. Stanley, who, in fact, does not seem to be himself clear upon the subject, as he calls it 'the battle of Beth-horon *or* Gibeon.'* We have a great idea that the Professor has invented the designation himself: if this be the case, surely he ought not to be angry with us for not being so well acquainted with his nomenclature as with the names of battles of world-wide fame. At all events, if we are to be better in future, he must give us something definite, and not leave the battle with an *alias* to its name.

Begging pardon of the reader for these remarks, for which Dr. Stanley is responsible, for he puts his charge of ignorance in such terms as to make them irresistible, we will now consider the general charge, and as far as this is concerned, we *distinctly and entirely deny it.* Not only do we believe that 'the battle at which Joshua commanded the sun to stand still' (not to call it by any new-fangled *sobriquet*) is perfectly and accurately known to every educated man such as those the Professor was addressing, but if we take the masses of our countrymen (who have souls to be saved, and who must be considered in all these sorts of questions), we venture to affirm, to assert absolutely and emphatically, that for one person who knows the battles of Salamis, Marathon, or Cannæ *by name*,

* Jewish Church, p. 238.

there are twenty who know *all the details* of Joshua's great battle. Whether this will be the case hereafter, depends entirely upon how far God, in His mercy, frustrates the attacks that are now being made upon the faith by Dr. Colenso, the Essayists, and others. We may be sure that to discredit the Book of Joshua is not the way to make *the people* take an interest in this battle greater than they do now; and if the patronage and interest of the select few be what is asked for, we may safely assert that until Hebrew supersedes Greek and Latin in our schools, it is in vain to endeavour to raise up opponents to those dearly-loved memories of our early days. It is a mistake in Dr. Stanley to suppose that he will be able to make the 'savage grandeur' of the Pentateuch into amusing and interesting reading, in the sense in which we apply the word 'interesting' to other books. Such an achievement is beyond the power even of his word-painting. To the ordinary reader, taking up these books in a sceptical spirit, they are too old, too archæological, too removed from any literary associations to be amusing and interesting; to the believer they speak too plainly of God's judgements against sin, of man's provocations, not to strike a chord in his heart to which the words 'amusing' or 'interesting' would jar in discord. No; the battle of Beth-horon will never resemble in men's minds the battles of classical antiquity; and the endeavour to substitute a dilettanti interest for the wrapt feeling of unquestioning submission and

awe with which God's revelation is now received, will indubitably fail.

There can be no question that since Niebuhr and Dr. Arnold took in hand Romulus and Remus and the heroes of ancient Rome, all interest in these persons has ceased, even to the merest schoolboy. There is a haze of unreality and falsehood about them that at once does away the feeling of friendship and personal acquaintance with which in former days old and young used to contemplate them. Hence, more than for any other reason, the disuse of classical similes and classical thought among us. Now, to the old-fashioned believer there never was any question about the reality of Moses or Joshua, or any of the other heroes of the Pentateuch. He might not know very much about them, but he knew all that God had revealed; and what more do we know for certain, after reading all the word-pictures that have ever been written? Hence there is a self-evident and strange inconsistency in the course Dr. Stanley pursues. He neither disbelieves nor discredits either the books of Moses or their narratives, but he applauds Dr. Colenso, who pronounces the whole affair, lawgiver, law, books, and narrative, to be 'unhistorical,' and in a foot-note defines 'unhistorical' to mean 'not historically true.' He professes to wish to make this early part of the Old Testament interesting and human, and yet gives his express sanction to writers who, like the 'Essayists and Reviewers,' try

to show that it is essentially legendary, *ergo* not human, *ergo*, as ample experience has shown us, uninteresting. Dr. Stanley *ought* to be a firm supporter of inspiration, an uncompromising opponent of neology and its hazy unrealities. He might then, indeed, with his genius and power, do great deeds for the truth.

We will now proceed to consider the miracle at Gibeon more at length.

In the first place, the rule we laid down in our introduction,* that there is no greater or less in miracles, applies to this as it does to every other miracle. The moment the direct action of the Creator is brought to bear on nature and nature's laws, all questions of comparative magnitude disappear. It is not for us to say whether of the twain, the raising of Lazarus or the miracle at Gibeon, was the greater; for the words great or small, greater or smaller, greatest or smallest, will not apply to either of them. It is necessary to premise this, because, in the remarks that follow, we would not be understood to be explaining away a miracle. If God had stated in the Bible that He, on any occasion, suspended or reversed the rotation† of the earth, it would be necessary for us either to believe that He did so, or to discredit God's Word. It so happens, however, that He has revealed nothing of the kind, and the irony of the reviewer

* See Introduction, p. 5.

† Essays and Reviews, 10th edition, p. 211.

and elaborate figures of the Bishop* are labour thrown away.

What, then, were the exact words of the human agent in this miracle? 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon.' And what was the answer? 'And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves on their enemies,' or, as it is in the Septuagint, until God had avenged them upon their enemies.

By the analogy of God's dealings with men, we know that this miracle was *not* the suspended rotation of the earth. If it had been so, it would have been a miracle extending not only to the spot for which it was wrought, but to the whole human race. Now this would be in direct contradiction to all God's dealings with man. All the dead did not rise when Lazarus rose; all the loaves and fishes in the world were not multiplied when the miraculous increase took place in Galilee; and, which is more to the purpose, when the sun ceased to shine in the land of Egypt, it still lighted up with its rays the contiguous land of Goshen. This last consideration teaches us the nature of the miracle; in the Egyptian darkness the sun ceased to shine over a limited space, causing 'a darkness that could be felt' (a result that could only arise from the absolute diversion of the sun's rays); in the miracle at Gibeon the sun con-

* Colenso, Pentateuch. Preface, p. x.

and which to the believer is *no disadvantage at all* —explains simply what *may have been* the means by which the other optical miracles mentioned in Scripture were wrought. In the present miracle, the reflected rays by which we see the moon were bent, and the moon appeared to stand still as the sun did; in the darkness in the land of Egypt the rays were diverted at right angles (or made to go right away) over a particular spot, hence 'darkness that might be felt' there and nowhere else. In the case of the sun-dial of Hezekiah the rays were bent backwards; hence the shadow went back at the particular spot, 'on the sun-dial of Ahaz.' How strongly does the mention of the name of the dial mark the local nature of the miracle! So again in that last great darkness at the crucifixion, we may well believe that all the sun's rays were diverted from lighting up the scene of man's supreme iniquity.

These are the simple solutions that man would give of the facts we find recorded in Scripture; they are not stated as in any way explaining what God did, and how He acted. Simple as they are, they would not have been put forward, had not the Bible facts been converted into Bible difficulties. It is enough for us to know that the miracles were wrought, and that, like all other miracles, they were local, inasmuch as it is not stated that they were over the whole earth. It has been attempted to show that even to our finite knowledge their being so presents no real difficulty, not to explain the

means, known only to Himself, by which God was pleased to work them.

These few remarks on the miracle of Joshua will conclude the present observations on the 'difficulties' of the freehandlers; it only remains to enter our protest against the assertion made by Dr. Colenso, at page 26 of his Introduction, and which finds an echo in the other works of the same school, —that the laity and working-people of this country are deeply tainted with unbelief in Scripture. The Bishop gives no proof of his assertion, while, if we were to give our own experience of the spirit in which the laity have received 'Essays and Reviews' and his own volume, the result would be anything but flattering to their authors. It is, however, with a sort of satisfaction that we take note of the way in which these gentlemen cling to a Church whose articles, taken in their every-day simple meaning, are distinctly antagonistic to their teaching. Happily, there is no spirit of martyrdom among them; and the extreme disingenuousness of Mr. Wilson's essay on the National Church has prepared us for the Bishop's assertion that 'he is not conscious of having said anything' to bring him within the decision of the Court of Arches. It is possible that, by managing to retain their position in the Church of England, at public school, and at university, they may be able to influence for evil many of the future young ministers of the Church; but we would hope for better things, and will fain believe that as the Tractarian movement died out, leaving as its legacy

a wholesome reverence for antiquity, so the Neological movement will follow the same fate, leaving as its legacy a deeper and more unquestioning submission to the Word of God, and a better appreciation of the inestimable treasure of which an endeavour has been made to deprive us. Should it, however, be otherwise, and evil days be in store for the Church, we cannot doubt that there will be found among churchmen and dissenters, among laymen and ministers, a number of faithful believers, who, like the Puritans in the reign of Charles II., will be the salt that will prevent the corruption from penetrating and permeating the whole of the body politic. In conclusion, it is incumbent on everyone who sees the tendency of these authors, and the inevitable result of man 'verifying' God's Word, to do his best, by voice and pen, to point out the rocks ahead. The present paroxysm of infidelity may be only a temporary symptom, a recoil of the pendulum of thought, or it may be the commencement of a serious falling away; in either case it is the duty of every Christian man not to sleep at his post, but to combat the enemy by every means in his power. A few general thoughts on this topic will furnish the conclusion of our next and last chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH.

Knowledge in general results from Belief — Small Proportion of certain Knowledge — Knowledge and Faith not antagonistic — Scripture Revelation of the Latter Days — *Christianity will spread* — Perfectibility of the Human Race contrary to Experience, but not impossible with God—The Work of the Spirit not to be measured — *Knowledge will increase* — Limits of Knowledge marked out, but Pebbles of Truth lying about — Examples: Geography — Astronomy — Pure Mathematics — Applied Science — Chemistry — Geology — Botany — Approach of Latter Days — *What about Faith?* — The Conflict hopeful — Scripture Inspiration to be maintained intact — God's Word as true as God's Science — Conclusion — Claim of the New School to the Monopoly of Honesty — Answered by the last Words of old John Evelyn.

KNOWLEDGE and Faith; must they ever be antagonistic, and must all that the former acquires be lost by the latter? Must that spread of knowledge for which the last two centuries have been famous—those clear streams of truth and science of which two well-known fountain-heads are our own Newton and Bacon—must they ever be sapping and undermining the ancient faith of our fathers, and are they destined, as some imagine, to make the venerable old fabric topple into ruin?

These and many other kindred questions are at once suggested by the juxtaposition of the two pregnant words that form the heading of our chapter. In one sense, the two are certainly opposed and incompatible: whatever is once included in the domain of certain knowledge is *ipso facto* removed from the domain of faith. Faith we know to be 'the substance of things hoped for,' i. e., the mental realisation of *things hoped for*, until, in its fullest developement, we arrive at *mental actual possession*; 'the evidence of *things not seen*,' i. e., the full entire credit and belief of what we do not see, and cannot know for certain to exist or to have existed. Clearly, things hoped for and things not seen belong not to the domain of knowledge; and hence, in one sense, we may truly affirm that whenever we acquire a certain knowledge of the truth or falsehood of any circumstance that we previously believed, we do by such knowledge remove it from the pale of faith into the pale of certainty, 'for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?' But when we come to reflect, how little is there that we know thus certainly,—how few are the events, even in every-day life, of which the knowledge comes to us otherwise than by the exercise of faith in the truth of books or in the veracity of our fellow-man,—may we not almost say that faith, belief, credit, call it by what name you will, is the only means by which we obtain an insight into the truth or falsehood of men or things? Hence we find that the seeming antagonism of knowledge and faith is apparent, and not

real; that knowledge without faith, knowledge by sight, or touch, or certainty, is most rare; and that the precedent in Christianity, where we find, among all the millions of Christians, one only to whom it was allowed to put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into the side of the Saviour, represents a fair proportion of all our knowledge; one event that we know for ourselves being counterbalanced by millions that we learn and credit on the testimony of others.

This consideration will be valuable to us in a double point of view; it will remind us that the Bible has at least as good a claim to our belief as that put forward by its antagonists, and it will enable us to rate at their proper value those opinions that are so frequently obtruded as 'certainties' in their pages. We shall thus be enabled to read in a calm critical spirit, not prepared to abdicate before the inflated chronology of Egypt, but preferring to exercise that moderate amount of faith that is required to credit the simple, lucid, continuous Bible narrative, rather than to obey our would-be masters, and swallow, without asking questions, all that they choose to give us.

The claim, indeed, upon our faith that is put forward by the most recent writer of the neological school, Dr. Colenso, is one so preposterously exorbitant, that it can hardly be looked upon as serious. The Bishop would have us believe that some four or five centuries before Christ an accomplished forger, taking the whole Jewish nation into

the secret, set to work to compose a system of laws and ceremonies the most intolerable the world has ever seen ('which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear'), and that, to carry out the joke, the whole nation then and there determined to *believe* what he wrote, and to *obey* as well as they could what he ordered. Moreover, these books happened to contain truths that have satisfied the conscience and guided the lives of the Christian Church for near 2,000 years. The gigantic proportions of the mouthful thus proffered to us have been well set forth in the February number of 'Good Words,' and will probably be fresh in the minds of our readers.

Apart, however, from the claim upon our faith made by those writers who ask us to discard from Scripture the supernatural and prophetic elements—a claim which when broadly looked at will be seen in all its vast dimensions, showing itself out of all proportion with that simple faith which credits both miracles and prophecy—it is satisfactory to reflect that no real or necessary antagonism exists between knowledge and faith, between learning and science and belief in the Bible. The most learned man, if his learning be but combined with humility, may be the most advanced Christian. The proportion of knowledge either demonstrable or proved by our own experience to be true, is very small, and what there is nowhere opposes or contradicts Holy Writ. We know that two and two are four, and we find that the Bible does not assert it to be

any other number. So, again, by a knowledge of the Hebrew language, we shall learn the two names by which God has been pleased to reveal Himself to man, and the eye of faith will see in the plural number of the name Elohim, and the singular of the name Jehovah, a distinct enunciation of the two great mysteries of the Godhead. There is nothing in this knowledge antagonistic to Scripture, but, on the contrary, much to edify the believer, and it is not, therefore, to the spread of knowledge that we must attribute the fact, that these two names have proved a stumblingblock to the Bishop of Natal, and that, embodied in two irreverent adjectives, they form the groundwork of his second volume. As well might knowledge be declared incompatible with belief in the unity of the present work, because some reader chose to assert its double authorship, and divide it respectively into Colensistic and Natalistic fragments.*

It is from three texts of Scripture that we shall derive the three heads under which we will proceed

* In the second part of Dr. Colenso's book, the first person, the '*I*,' '*my*,' and '*me*,' which assumed such prominence in his first part, almost disappears, and the '*we*,' by which the writer decorously suppresses his own personality in the presence of the greatness of his subject, is used in its stead. On the Bishop's principles of criticism, this change would be enough to prove beyond controversy that the two parts were the work of different authors. If by any chance this volume should happen to come under his notice, the author would venture to urge upon his consideration this remarkable instance of 'a case in point.'

to consider our subject, having established that increased knowledge means enlarged faith in what we learn, whether it be history, languages, science, or whatever our subject of study may be, and does not necessarily mean diminished belief in the Bible.

The three texts to which we allude — prophetic foreshadowings of the increased knowledge that was to be hereafter — apply to the 'latter days' of the world in its present state; and in the course of this chapter we shall endeavour to show the good grounds, derived from increased secular knowledge and the developed area of Christianity, that we possess for considering the present to belong to the latter days of the world's existence. We find, then, that in the latter days

Christianity will spread:—'The knowledge of the *glory of the Lord* shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.' *

Secular knowledge will increase: — 'Seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' †

What about faith? — 'When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?' ‡

Such is the teaching of Holy Scripture, and we may well believe that the last question is left undecided in mercy: because, if answered in the affirmative, man would presume; if in the negative, man would despair.

We shall consider the subject, shortly, under

* Hab. ii. 14. † Daniel xii. 4. ‡ Luke xviii. 8.

the three divisions into which it has so naturally fallen:—

1st. Christianity will spread.

2nd. Knowledge will increase.

3rd. What about faith?

There is no dream, no imagination, to which the wisest philosopher will cling with such tenacity as that of the indefinite perfectibility of the human race. Men who have succeeded in mastering their passions, and who have acquired enlarged views of the folly as well as the wickedness of war, cannot persuade themselves that others will not see things in the same light, and that, as long as the world lasts — or, rather, as long as the human race lasts — wars will not cease. Hence it is, that at the close of any long immunity from war (caused generally by exhaustion — for exhaustion and mutual dread appear to be the only grounds *hitherto* of any forbearance of one nation to another), we find ourselves in the fool's paradise in which we revelled in 1851, and are only too ready to believe the would-be prophets, who tell us that the world has grown wiser, and that wars have come to an end. A rude awakening ever attends such day-dreams; and the present state of the North American continent is a lesson that ought not to be thrown away upon us. How powerless are education and ostensible Christianity combined before the evil instincts of the human heart! But this permanence of what we may call the normal state of humanity—killing and being killed—teaches us more than the

mere failure of education to eradicate the instincts of covetousness and violence, or neutralise the bump of combativeness, as phrenologists term it. It teaches us this lesson: that hitherto the policy of the nations of the earth has not been swayed by the precepts of Christianity; that the Gospel never has been, and, *if we judge by experience*, never will be, the motive power that influences large communities of men; in other words, that the visible Church, which *acknowledges* Christianity, is, and always has been, distinct from the Spiritual Church, which *obeys* it.

These considerations enable us to perceive the meaning of the promise first quoted, that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, i. e., the knowledge of His dispensation of mercy to all mankind, in the free gift of salvation through Christ—for this, even more than the wonders of creation, tells of the glory of God—shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. That this knowledge shall cover the earth is distinctly promised, and we see the promise in process of fulfilment every day; but that great work of the Spirit, the renewal of man's fallen nature, is not, as to the extent of its action on the human race, or as to the period of its greater or less development, revealed to us. This, indeed, is the final guerdon that rewards the victors in the battle of life; this is what each one must strive and pray for for himself, and strive and pray for for others. Hence, if we may so express it, and we cannot find any other terms in which to convey our meaning, Scripture does not give us by anticipation any statistics

as to the work of the Holy Spirit. It may be great, or it may be small; it may swell *far beyond* the measure of earnest faith and active charity and kindness which we now behold in Christian England, or it may recede, and mankind fall back into the slough of infidelity. Whatever may happen, one thing is certain, it will vary directly in proportion to the work of faith. Where and when faith is strong, there will be much outpouring of the Spirit; where and when faith is shaken or weak, the work of the Spirit must not be looked for. How great, then, is the issue of the question, 'Shall we or shall we not believe?' Not only the salvation of each man, but the future of the whole race, is involved in the answer.

These thoughts bring us back to our starting-point. It is not, then, a vain imagination of the philosopher, this ideal perfectibility of nations and of the whole race! It has never been, but it may be; it has never existed for a single nation, but it may come to pass for all nations; but whether or not any future outpouring of the Spirit of Grace will take place, must, under God, depend primarily on man himself — on the exercise of that freewill with which he is endowed from on high — on *his willingness to believe*, a willingness to which the gift of faith is never denied. But these secret workings of the mind of man, and this action of the Spirit of God, are beyond and beside all arrays of figures, all statistics, beyond even any deducing from what has been — what will be. Therefore, man may

'thank God and take courage;' he may do his best by missions to sow over the whole globe the knowledge of Christianity, in the full persuasion that, while the plants that spring up *may* be only few, and those exhibiting but sparse and weakly blooms, yet, on the other hand, there may be a moving of the Spirit among men, and the whole earth may blossom as a garden. But though we may hope for such a future, we must not expect it; we ought to pray for it, and to work for it, leaving it to God's providence to bring about what result seems to Him good. It is enough for us to know that man is allowed to be an agent, and to take a part in that dissemination of the truth without which the full development of spiritual Christianity would be impossible; more than this is in mercy withheld from our knowledge.

We will now consider the second part of our subject, the increase of secular knowledge which is to precede the end, — 'Many will run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' There is a well-known saying of Sir Isaac Newton in which he compares himself and his brother-philosophers to children picking up pebbles on the sea-shore of the ocean of truth. Like many other remarks that fell from the lips or flowed from the pen moved by that intellect, the clearest, soundest, and most sagacious that has yet appeared on earth, this saying includes far more than is at first sight apparent. The humbleness that prompted the remark in one so gifted at once impresses us, and its recognition

of the fact that we are standing on the shore, and not sailing on the sea of truth, is of itself a lesson for all time. Little children picking up pebbles, we have no means or power to explore the wonders of the deep; we may gaze and marvel, we may even guess and speculate, as long as we do not compel others to adhere to our guesses, or promote our speculations from their true sphere into dogmatic truths. To sail on that broad ocean, little children as we are, is beyond our power; hereafter we may breast its billows, but we cannot do so now. But there is a further lesson of truth wrapped up in the saying of the great philosopher; his own discoveries had taught him that at that period he stood in front of a *receding tide*, that every branch of science had an epoch of development before it, during which fresh spaces scattered over with bright shells and pebbles would be left uncovered for the investigation of himself and other and succeeding little children; yet he knew that it was but a tide after all, and that at some time or other low-water mark would be reached. How soon the human race would contemplate that low-water mark, would see the limit of scientific enquiry drawn with a bold hard line, he did not dare to prognosticate; but may not we in these latter days safely venture to assert that in many branches of science that low-water mark is already reached! Shells and pebbles are strewed about in plenty to reward the industry of man, but great discoveries in most branches are *impossible*, and must not be looked for.

As a first instance of this fact, we will consider the science of geography; one hundred years ago a great part of the globe we inhabit, the great Australian continent, the islands of the Pacific, and much more, was unknown. Now we may fairly say that we know every acre of it, and that great geographical discoveries have come to an end within the century last past. When we say that we *know* every acre, we do not assert that every acre has been traversed by civilised man; we are well aware that there is a good deal yet to be explored—the Arctic ice regions, the Australian desert, and the lake regions at the head-waters of the Nile, will probably for some years to come be the dragons with which our modern heroes, our Franklins and Leichardts, will go forth to do battle. But we may say we know these inhospitable spaces for all that; we can tell their boundaries, we can measure their exact area in square miles, omitting mountains; they figure in our maps, they are, in fact, pebbles and shells to pick up; but their complete investigation we can await with patience, and it can never constitute a geographical epoch like the discoveries of former ages. There are, indeed, no more worlds for the Alexanders of geographical science to conquer, and we may truly say that our terrestrial globe, in its broad features, is completely known.

It may be objected that such language can hardly be allowed at a time when even the shape of our globe itself is called in question, and when the learned world are balancing the arguments brought

forward to prove that it is a prolate and not an oblate, an egg-like rather than an orange-like spheroid. Accurate measurements will soon settle that question; and whether our sphere be elongated or flattened, we may feel quite sure that a coral islet or two is all that now remains for us to discover. This complete knowledge of our home is not confined to one or two civilised nations, but pervades every nation, Christian or heathen, on the face of the earth. Maps have penetrated everywhere, and only the small remains of savagery that exist apart from missions and schools are now unacquainted with, at all events, the outlines of geographical science.

Again, in our kindred worlds, the planets, we have timed them, weighed them, measured them, and completed our work by the discovery of Neptune; the planet being wanted to explain an error, and his whereabouts being shown by the error itself. A few more asteroids may be discovered in that zone, where some sixty or seventy represent what has been or what might have been a planet; but what are these but the coral islets of the solar system? We may correct mistakes, and discoveries like that of the spectrum analysis may give us clearer and truer views of the real nature of the heavenly bodies, but what is all this but the pebbles on the beach of truth? There was, indeed, a grand receding of the tide when Newton told of gravitation, of its result, elliptic orbits, when he endowed us with that scientific steam-engine the differential

calculus. Instruments greatly perfected will probably enable us to draw up long lines of figures, and know that they represent the distances of certain fixed stars, or to say, as we do of Wega, the brightest gem in our northern hemisphere, that light can come from it in fourteen years, that what we now look on is the star as it was fourteen years ago, and that for that period the rays by which we see it have been travelling day and night without ceasing, in direct lines to the pupils of our eyes, at the rate of twelve millions of miles a minute, thereby adopting the only measure we can find by which these arrays of figures can be made to convey any definite idea at all to our minds. Again, the comets with their imponderable filmy mass, their waves and flashes of light, will trouble astronomers to calculate accurately their return, and by their absence at the proper place and time teach them the lesson of humility. All these are the shells and pebbles which strew the seaboard of astronomy; the low-water mark of the science itself, that bit of beach which mankind ever since the creation of the world had been peering and dipping their heads in a vain attempt to scrutinise, was revealed to them less than two hundred years ago, when 'God said, Let Newton be, and all was light.'

Simple science again, pure mathematics, as we call it, there low-water mark has been reached also within the last two centuries. This is not the place to enter into a detailed examination of such a subject, but we will appeal to any mathematician whe-

ther, in pure mathematics, the line does not stand out strongly and clearly marked. Doubtless, in integration, and in all the higher branches of analysis, pebbles of truth will from time to time be picked up, while our methods will continually become more symmetrical and more generalised; but we can feel as sure as we do that we know the surface of our globe, that no great discoveries in pure mathematics are laid up for the future.

Again, in applied science, or mixed mathematics, all the leading principles are established; and though experiment will constantly bring new facts to our notice, and may sometimes, as in the pressure of moving water, show us that our data were wrong, yet, though the shore be more thickly strewed over with brighter shells and sparkling pebbles than in any other sphere of human knowledge except chemistry, here also low-water mark has been reached, and that less than two hundred years ago.

Chemistry and geology, the two youngest sisters of the family of science, may perhaps be allowed to claim that the tide may yet recede for them a little, but, short as their lives have been, we may doubt whether the time of great discoveries will not be soon over, and whether their low-water mark will not soon be reached.

In botany, it is little more than a century since Linnæus arranged for us the *indigesta moles* of former observers, since he showed us that plants were truly living creatures, and that their increase and fecundity followed the laws which seem to be

universal (the parthenogenesis of the aphis and one other case being held, as at present appears, to be exceptions) in animated nature. Much still remains to be discovered, but here also we recognise low-water mark at the margin of the shell-spangled beach.

It is not to be understood that, in the foregoing remarks, we underrate the amount that has yet to be discovered — that we ignore all that is now going on,—how venturesome children, in our grand generalisations, such as the correlation of physical forces, or in the hardy experiments on the nervous fluid, seem to be intent on snatching, as it were, a pebble from the sea itself;—no; there are still many treasures for us to pick up, and, as long as man remains on earth, gems of this kind will be provided for a few among the highest class of intellects. But when we reflect on the advance made in the last two centuries, and that nothing now discovered can ever be lost, we may indeed fairly infer that in knowledge, taken generally, the full extent of the space that man is capable of exploring is unfolded to our view.

And is it not to the instinctive recognition of this class of facts that much of the tendency of the human mind to bold, if not wild, speculation is to be attributed? When men thought they had the infinite, or something like it, as vague, indefinite, and looming to their minds as large, to be discovered at home, they did not need to raise their minds to grasp at the hidden things of heaven, but

were content to keep their eyes fixed on earth, looking for the unexplored wonders they knew that it contained. But it can hardly be said to be so now; and as years roll on, and man becomes more familiar with every nook and corner of the globe, large as it is it will seem to him a prison-house, and men's minds will more and more be turned to contemplate the world of the future. We thus can *see* how increased knowledge tends to prepare the way for the coming change, by weaning us from materialism, and giving us in its stead a greater share of mental spirituality. May we not, therefore, conclude that this great increase of human knowledge, occurring as it does contemporaneously with an unprecedented extension of the sphere of action of God's Word, is a sign to us of the near approach of the latter days? Signs in heaven and signs on earth we are promised, and this is one of them,—a sign more convincing to the eye of faith than could be any mere material portent.

If we carefully consider the words of the prophecy, we shall see that the universal knowledge, not the universal acceptance, of Christianity, is mentioned as preceding the end. We can see that, though the second advent will be when it pleases God, and that man cannot possibly foretell the period, yet that, even to our limited apprehensions, the world seems ripening. Christianity is not credited in Mahometan countries, but those nations cannot be said to be ignorant of its existence; so also among the heathen; and when the Bible

Society and Christian missions have done their full work, when India and China have been opened up to the Hindostanee and Chinese Scriptures, when the work of the last fifty years has gone on for another fifty years, and more abundantly, should we not be justified in looking for the end of the present dispensation, when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will have covered the earth as the waters cover the sea, and when, men running to and fro, knowledge shall have increased?

Lastly, we come to the enquiry, What about faith? 'When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith upon the earth?' Every portion of God's Word is 'profitable for instruction,' and the Book of Jonah teaches us the lesson that God's judgements are not absolute, but depend upon man's faith and man's conduct. The men of Nineveh believed and repented, and Nineveh was not destroyed; the punishment denounced was a warning, and not a curse. We are justified in applying this lesson to the falling away which is predicted as preceding the end. The work of the Holy Spirit, as we before stated, is not capable of being predicted or classed in unalterable statistics, and we are bound to labour that the faith of men may be confirmed, and that the Spirit of God, finding a ready welcome from man's freewill, the question put by our Saviour, and by Him left unanswered, may receive a triumphant affirmative.

How is man to labour in this good cause? How is the Bible to be raised aloft above the waves of

German infidelity, of Roman error, of much indifference, and of the knowledge that puffeth up? It must be by promoting in every way that faith and belief in the Bible that we accord to the truths of science, that firm persuasion that does not doubt. This virtue is rife in times of persecution, and we see it now in Spain, as we saw it of late in Italy, where men are facing the galleys for a Bible that they believe. Here the persecution will be slight indeed, merely, perhaps, the stigma of our faith being 'blind' and 'unreasoning.' We must be ready, while we allow the various readings and some slight discrepancies in the genealogies to show the human element of copyists' errors, and that a miraculously preserved standard copy does not exist, to give way no further, and to deny at once the inference that the book is merely human, or that a verifying power exists in man. We must repel the idea now so frequently and prominently brought forward, that many untrustworthy pieces of evidence can constitute a revelation of God; that a fallible and erroneous tradition, human 'songs of Israel,' human rhapsodies called by us prophecies, a mass of vague hearsay records, an existing Church, and a New Testament whose authors were so foolish and prejudiced as to believe every word of the Old, being indeed supported by the example of their great Master in so doing, are, or have been, or can be, *in any sense*, a revelation by God Almighty, of His Person and His Commands to man.

The little element of error we find in Scripture

we believe to be permitted to exist to try our faith, for if the roll of the Book was proffered to us by an angelic hand, who would dare to disbelieve, and where would be man's faith or man's freewill? To explain the sort of faith we mean in God's Word, we will instance the faith of Sir Isaac Newton in God's science. Newton was at one period conducting experiments on the refraction of light, and forming a register of refractive indices (i. e., the angles at which rays are bent in passing through different materials, such as water, crystal, flint glass, &c.). To his great surprise, he found that olive oil and the diamond presented the same refractive index. His impression on the occasion he put on record in words to the following effect:—'It will probably hereafter be found that the diamond is of a fatty nature.' This remark was not merely a prescience of what the chemist would hereafter discover to be true, that pure olive oil and the diamond were but carbon in different forms, but it was an acknowledgement that 'science and experiment have never deceived me; and though the fact they reveal seem to be *most improbable*, yet I am satisfied that, some day, a fuller knowledge will prove it to be true.' Whether this remark saw the light at the period at which it was written, or of the reception it got, we are not aware, but we know that, when used in the present day with reference to revelation, it is at once gibbeted as an insult to the reason and intellect of man. 'We must understand fully at once,' is the outcry of the present day; 'I cannot understand

now, but I shall know hereafter,' should be the answer of the believer.

It is satisfactory also to reflect, that a large portion of his long life was spent by Sir Isaac Newton in a close study of the Old Testament and of Bible chronology, and that the difficulties which seem to appal our modern critics of Jewish history had no power to shake the faith of the humble student of inspired Scripture. That sagacious, faithful spirit, that believed science when it told him that the hard, bright, sparkling diamond was but another form of oil or fat—an inference that all probability seemed to disprove, and that nothing but the teaching of science supported—found no difficulty in crediting God's Word when it told him that the sun stood still at Joshua's command, and that the waters of the Red Sea divided to let the Children of Israel pass through, 'the waters being a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.' This greatest intellect that God has created to enlighten man bowed before His truth in revelation, as it did before His truth in science.*

* It is to be hoped that the three sections of the 'Principia' will never be voted obsolete, and expunged from the Cambridge course. That Newton himself furnished us with a short cut to his conclusions is no reason why we should put aside the wonderful chain of reasoning by which he established, if he did not himself arrive at, his results. The memory of such an intellect is the most precious heir-loom of the University, and all her studious sons ought to be allowed to take with them, as a life-long possession, the power in some slight degree of estimating its nature, its acumen, its patience, and its unequalled comprehensiveness.

Before we bring to a close these thoughts on Scripture inspiration and the new school of theology, we would venture again to call the attention of our readers to the passages from the essay of M. Scherer, which we have translated at the beginning of the last chapter. How clearly and eloquently do they set forth the inevitable tendency of the new school, at first to a hazy Pantheism, and ultimately to simple Deism, the worship of our deified selves! And to this we are brought in the name of truth and honesty. The seven essayists, because in their book they attack the faith, are champions of the truth; and when a voice is raised in opposition to their delusive sophistries, they are sufferers for the truth; and even Bishop Colenso, in his Tom Paine redivivus, babbles about truth, of which it seems he is the redoubtable and unconquerable champion. But in times gone by there were, as there are now, lovers of Truth for her own sake, who did not so serve her cause. We began by a passage from one of them, sturdy old Grotius, and we will end with a voice from the tomb of another:—*

JOHN EVELYN, Esq.,

Fell asleep the 27th day of February, 1705–6, being the 86th year of his age, in full hope of a glorious resurrection, through faith in Jesus Christ. Living in an age of extraordinary events and revolutions, he learnt (as himself asserted) this truth, which, pursuant to his intention, is here declared:— 'THAT ALL IS VANITY WHICH IS NOT HONEST, AND THAT THERE IS NO SOLID WISDOM BUT IN REAL PIETY.'

* From the epitaph of John Evelyn, at Wotton.

NOTE TO PAGE 54.

THE SUPERNATURAL.

IN a recent number of the 'Edinburgh Review,' the writer of an article on 'The Supernatural' opposes the 'common sense idea that a miracle is a suspension or violation of the laws of nature,' and prefers the solution 'that out of His infinite knowledge of His laws, or of His infinite power of making them the instruments of His will, God may and does use them for extraordinary indications of His presence;' and further on he adds, 'that our own experience shows that the universal reign of law is perfectly consistent with a power of making those laws subservient to design.' In testing how far the popular opinion is erroneous and how far the philosophical opinion is true on this matter, nothing is so likely to lead us to a right conclusion as the simple consideration of one or two individual cases. For instance, we will consider the miracles of the raising of Lazarus and of the miraculous increase of the loaves and fishes. In accordance with what possible *law* can the first of these miracles be explained? Decomposition had set in, the blood and

tissues had undergone that mysterious change which follows the breaking up of chemical affinity caused by the withdrawal of life: can the fitting of such a body to receive again life and the soul be said to have happened *in obedience to any known law*? or even in obedience to any of those imaginary 'laws of which man knows and can know nothing'?

The case, dispassionately considered, speaks for itself; and shows that the popular opinion is not so absurd or erroneous as it is frequently considered. This miracle can only be accounted for by referring it to the direct interposition of God; that the Almighty who made and decreed the laws of nature, and who *generally* uses them as His *means* of *action*, did not do so in this case. The miracle of the loaves leads to a similar inference: when loaves are made in obedience to the laws of nature, the wheat must first be grown, and then the loaves made. Instead of supposing that in this case the loaves were made in obedience to some law that we do not understand, how much simpler is the supposition that they were formed by Omnipotence in obedience to no law at all! It is true that in this view we shall not agree altogether with Bishop Butler; but may not this able and lucid writer have been carried too far in his argument on this point, by what the reviewer calls 'his sense of oneness in the universe of God'? The marvels of natural history, the wonders revealed in Darwin's 'Orchids,' are altogether beside the question looked

upon in this light. The study of the 'fearful and wonderful' frame we inhabit, the contemplation of the wonders of design that unfold themselves at every fresh use of the microscope, be the object we are scrutinising no greater than the proboscis of a gnat or the feather on a butterfly's wing, these only serve to impress us more and more deeply with the infinite *knowledge*, *resource* (contrivance is the usual, but not very apt or correct term), and lovingkindness of the Almighty Creator. They do not show that it was in obedience to any 'law' that Gideon's fleece was dry when all around was wet with dew, and was wet when all around was dry, or that any 'law' guided the hand that wrote the words of warning on Belshazzar's wall. How, then, the reviewer arrives at his conclusion, 'that whatever may be the difficulties of Christianity, this is not one of them, that it calls on us to believe in *any exception* to the universal prevalence and power of law,' it seems difficult to imagine. The only solution seems to be that the word 'law' is used in a sense identical with 'the will of God.' If the word be used in that sense, all is indeed clear and simple enough; and though we may not approve or allow the synonyme, we cannot in this view reject the conclusions. But if by 'law' be understood natural laws or laws of nature, those laws by which the dew falls, the bodies of the dead decompose, the laws by which material bread exists and material fish multiply, then indeed the reviewer would seem to have no sure ground for the assertion he so

emphatically and unequivocally makes. There is, of course, the alternative of supposing the law mentioned as 'universal' to be that alluded to in the early part of the article, of which 'man knows and can know nothing;' if so, on the principle *e nihilo nihil fit*, we may at once allow that of a 'law' so nugatory, impalpable, and evanescent the reviewer is at liberty to predicate anything he may think proper.

A little reflection will, however, show us whence arises the error in this and many analogous cases, especially in that of Bible inspiration. There can be no question that inspiration, if it exists, must be something *supernatural*, something in itself beyond and beside nature and nature's laws, it must be that secret thing of God that man's statistics cannot symmetrise, or man's intellect understand. Hence, we may take it as an example of the miraculous. Suppose we allow such an influence to exist and pervade the whole of our Bible as we have it, and as we have received it from our fathers; may we not, at the same time, allow that the writers and composers were men and women such as we are? Must the Divine element necessitate the extinction or absorption of the human element? Clearly not; and it is in this that the *miracle* of inspiration really consists. There would be no miracle in God using the hand of man to trace words, or the mouth of man to utter them, any more than there is a miracle in our making a piano, and then playing any tune we think proper upon it. Such a proceeding would

be in obedience to the *known law*, that the maker of any passive instrument may use it to accomplish his ends. But Bible inspiration is supernatural, because it combines the human and divine, and because it is, *in consequence*, unamenable to any law, known or unknown, of nature. It is an example of the contact of the finite and infinite, which we have shown in the previous pages to be absolutely and essentially incomprehensible and unintelligible to man. It will be remembered that we instanced freewill in man co-existing with God's omnipotence and omniscience, the origin of evil, and one or two other insoluble problems, as taking their rise simply in this contact. What, then, does this consideration teach us? Why, that we can no more solve the problem of the extent, or degree, or sort, or nature of inspiration, than we can the problem how a creature made of the dust of the earth, and who only lives on sufferance, can be said to have freewill, or how evil first came into existence. There are many other problems of the same kind; we cannot, do what we will, reconcile God's omnipresence with His absence from the place of eternal punishment. Why then endeavour to probe a mystery?—the inspiration of Scripture is as entirely beyond our comprehension as the double nature of the Incarnate Deity. We may draw up a literary Athanasian creed, but what shall we be the better for it when all is said and done? Why not kneel down and worship in the presence of facts that we cannot comprehend? This, as we understand it, is the

real meaning of Professor Mansel's much-canvassed Bampton Lectures. In this case, what will be our view of Scripture? We shall feel sure that, being inspired, it must be true, because God is Truth; we shall expect to find a human book, written by men about men, because the book is human. We shall find that the facts are all true, being contained in the Word of God; while the best men in it are sinners, being in fact, for the most part, just such as we are ourselves, only with less knowledge and as great temptations, but with a stronger faith, which more than compensated for all intellectual deficiencies. If we contemplate the Bible in this light, we can at once perceive that all questions of *probable* or *improbable* come to an end, and books like Bishop Colenso's can have no weight; and, further, we do not expect to find all the facts mentioned in the Bible explainable by any known law, or by any law at all, for we feel that the Book itself, from its double nature, is an exception to any law; we look, in fact, to find miracles in it, for the Book is a miracle itself.

We ought, then, in investigating the Bible, to strive to learn all we can from it and about it, all we so learn being of infinite import to us; but we must not doubt or demur: we must remember that the phrase 'it is written' silenced the Devil in the wilderness, and the same phrase will be powerful to silence his whisperings to our own soul. The Bible narrative, then, such as we have explained it to be, essentially miraculous itself, as

presenting to us the contact of the finite and infinite, contains the account of many marvellous events, some of which we think we can account for by natural causes, others of which seem to be unaccountable by any laws that we are acquainted with. What ought to be our attitude in the presence of these events? Where we think we can explain by natural causes we are not debarred from doing so; but we are forbidden to disbelieve because we cannot so explain. Some who choose to consider the explanation derived from natural causes to be the true one are quite justified in holding their belief, while others who choose to recognise the direct action of the Almighty in opposition to, or contravention of, any law, are quite at liberty to do so, as nothing in heaven or earth can limit the power of God. It would seem that in this as in so many other cases differences of opinion may exist without in any way derogating from the influence, authority, or power of God's Word. This view would not justify the persecution of a Galileo, though it cannot be held to palliate the inexplicable determination of Bishop Colenso to continue to hold high office in the Church of England.

On the whole, then, the article of the Edinburgh reviewer, if it referred only to Providence, to the constant action upon every event which is comprised in the idea of the government of the universe by God, or to Special Providence, to that direct action of God in favour of the good or in opposition to the evil which Scripture teaches us to be in

constant operation, would be a clear and lucid setting forth of what we may well believe to be a true state of the case. Where it breaks down is in its application to the Scripture miracles. These events were interpositions of Providence required for the salvation of the human race, and as such were, like the inspiration of Scripture, altogether above and beyond the power of thought to imagine or pen to describe. It is futile, therefore, to speculate upon how they came to pass, as of the truth of even the happiest guess we can know nothing certain. We can generally, however, see a cause for them. For instance, would any among the Jews have listened to the preaching of our Saviour if it had not been for His display of supernatural power? Remember for a moment the jealous monotheism, the intense spirituality of the Jewish people,—a spirituality so concentrated that even the existence of spirits and angels was denied by many, in order that all thoughts of heaven might be centred in Jehovah, in Elohim, in the one God. And then think of the claim of a young working man, a carpenter of thirty years of age, or thereabouts, to be the Son of God and to be equal with God. We can see that such a claim required miracles to substantiate it. Our reason shows us in this, and in other instances in the Bible, good and sufficient *cause* for miracles being wrought; but reason is unable to explain *how* they were wrought. The conclusion of the Edinburgh reviewer, that they all occurred in obedience to law, is not really a conclusion, but a *hypothesis*. It is

difficult to imagine how in the face of the instances quoted above, the raising of Lazarus and the miracle of the loaves, this view can be held; but if anyone considers that it elevates or simplifies his ideas of the Supreme Being he is no doubt at liberty to hold it, for it cannot be said to be what Bacon calls a thinking of God unworthily. On the other hand, those who, believing Scripture, decline to define how miracles were wrought, though probably they may consider some to have been accomplished by means of law, and others without law, some indeed to be marvels, or signs, or wonders, and others to be essentially miracles, these have good ground for their belief. 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.'

One word more on Scripture inspiration. There are passages where, the writer speaking in his own name, the human nature of the passage is self-evident; for instance, the last verse of St. John's Gospel: but that we can see one or two such passages is no proof either that we possess the verifying faculty that would enable us to eliminate all that is human, or that we are at liberty to call the Old Testament Jewish history, and treat it as we should any other oriental history; and, in fact, when we have once moved into the enclosure of Scripture we must remember that the ground whereon we stand is holy ground, and that the attitude of *humility* and *reverence* is the only one that becomes us. It is in this respect that the Bishop of Natal's book is valuable, and has done

real service to the Church of Christ; before free-handling has become general or fashionable, it tells us, in unmistakeable accents, whither it all tends. It will be at our own peril that we shall proceed if we despise or overlook this lofty beacon warning us off the shoals and quicksands of unbelief.

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